

## Billy McCORMACK

A handsome six foot Irishman, with muscles and a fine light baritone voice to match, Billy never did make the big time although he deserved to. Most of his recorded output was on Woolworth's Embassy label and as one reviewer at the time commented "had he been with a big label he would have certainly given David Whitfield a run for his money".

A Belfast boy, Billy sang semi-pro before serving with the R.A.F. during wartime. After demob he decided to try show business full time and worked in variety around Ireland appearing in the show 'Come Hither' and then with comedian Tommy Morgan's 'Tommy's in Town'. This also brought him on to mainland Britain, with many appearances in Scotland.

Charlie Chester, at the time on the road with his 'Stand Easy' show, had a problem one evening while appearing in Belfast when singer Frederick Ferrari fell ill. At short notice Billy filled in and Charlie was impressed enough to recommend him to theatrical agents George and Alfred Black. This resulted in a twelve month booking, throughout 1951, touring in their revue 'Sky High' that also featured comics Reg Varney and Benny Hill, followed by a summer season at Blackpool's Palace Theatre.

During 1952 Billy became the regular vocalist on radio's 'Charlie Chester Show', played another Blackpool summer season and recorded for Parlophone. The later obviously didn't do too well as they never repeated the exercise and it was a couple of years before he made another.

However good things were around the corner in the form of the Crazy Gang and he joined them in their Coronation year revue, 'Ring Out The Bells', at London's Victoria Palace in November 1952. The show ran for twenty months until June 1954 and Billy, billed as "Bless Your Heart McCormack", received nothing but praise.

Next came just a short holiday before he was back in Blackpool, this time in the Opera House summer show 'Talk of the Town' with Jimmy Edwards, Tony Hancock and Joan Turner. When the season ended the whole show moved south for the winter, taking him back to the West End and into the Adelphi Theatre.

As the major labels still showed no interest, it was up to their smaller competitors like Planet and Polygon to bring Billy back into the recording studio, with some pleasant ballads, but none a commercial success. In 1955 Billy recorded some numbers for an L.P on the cut price Solitaire label.

When 'Talk of the Town' finally ended, as well as taking a well earned rest, Billy did some variety, radio and television work before returning to Blackpool once again, in the Hylda Baker 1956 summer show 'She Knows You Know' at the South Pier Pavilion.

During that summer came the first of the McCormack double 'A' sides on the new Embassy label exclusive to Woolworth Stores. Covering many of the popular ballads of the day, although not making the charts (Embassy were never included) the number of his discs sold must have been quite considerable.

Following on the success of their Blackpool show

Billy toured around the country with Hylda Baker well into 1957. It was during that year that he decided, not having achieved star status in the U.K. that he would, like many others at the time, seek his fortune in the new world and in September with his family left for a new life in the sunnier climate of Australia, where radio, T.V. and variety welcomed him with open arms.

### Billy McCormack Recordings

#### PARLOPHONE

R 3523 Apl 52 'Bless your heart / Song of the carefree heart'

#### PLANET

E 1008 Mar 54 'Somewhere someone (is saying a prayer) /

Who

knows'

#### POLYGON

P 1156 Mar 55 'Unsuspecting heart / I went to my mother'

P 1176 Aug 55 'Stars shine in your eyes / For as long as I live'

(acc by Laurie Johnson

Orch)

#### EMBASSY (acc by Johnny Gregory orch)

WB 189 May 56 'My September love / I'll be home'

WB 197 Sep 56 'A woman in love / Rich in love'

WB 216 Nov 56 'Just walking in the rain /

A house with

love in it'

WB 227 Mar 57 'The one beside you / Adoration waltz'

WB 254 Oct 57 'Fascination / Old Cape Cod'

## Chas. McDEVITT

Born in Glasgow on 4th December 1934, Charles James McDevitt, the son of a tailor, played guitar and banjo in local jazz bands while he was still at college. Coming south the family settled in Camberley, Surrey where Charles played in the local High Curley Stompers before joining The Crane River Jazz Band in 1955. At the same time Chas. also led a group that often played alongside Tommy Steele and others at the Two I's coffee bar in Soho (he lodged upstairs for a time) and he also led a regular trio at Cy Laurie's jazz club in Great Windmill Street. While all this was going on Chas still had a day time office job, but after winning a Radio Luxembourg talent contest, sponsored by Pye, four weeks running he decided to make his occasional skiffle sessions a more permanent group.

Appearing on stage dressed in blue jeans and yellow shirts, its members were Chas with Alex Whitehouse and Dennis Carter on guitars plus John Paul string bass and Mark Sharratt drums. During his Luxembourg broadcasts he had met a guitar playing folk singer by the name of Nancy Whiskey and persuading her to join his new skiffle group turned out to be the making of it. Booked by agent Joe Collins, they played their first week in variety on 'The Skiffle Show of 1957' at The Metropolitan in Edgware Road. Peggy Seeger had been doing well on the folk circuit

with 'Freight train' a new American version of a traditional song, so Chas McDevitt began using it on his group's concerts, initially singing it himself but later with Nancy taking the vocal. They thought it sounded quite good and had a private recording made, but several record companies turned it down before Oriole agreed to release it in January 1957.

Not a fast seller, it was mid-April before it appeared on the NME chart, but by June it had reached No.5 and it registered eighteen weeks in total. Across the Atlantic, out on the obscure Chic label, it still managed to reach No.40 on the US Top 100, although the home-made cover version by Rusty Draper soon overtook it and made No.6. Still, considering the Whiskey-McDevitt disc was from a couple of unknowns, they had done exceptionally well and the eventual world-wide sales made it a million seller. Chas and Nancy made a two week visit to the States to plug their disc, but because of union objection the rest of the band were not allowed to appear.

The McDevitt group then entered a Lou Preager 'Jazz Band' contest at Hammersmith Palais and won an appearance on ITV's 'Palais Party' screened 26<sup>th</sup> April 1957. They were on radio's 'Festival of Dance Music' from the Royal Albert Hall two days later and made several appearances on television's 'Six Five Special'. At Tommy Steele's request they appeared in his 1957 film 'The Tommy Steele Story'.

By now there were few people in Britain who had not heard of skiffle and the Chas. McDevitt Group (although Lonnie Donegan was always just ahead) and what had up until now still been only a semi-pro group (McDevitt himself made several solo appearances with the Eric Delaney Band) needed to become full time professional to meet all of its growing commitments. Consequently Alex Whitehouse, Dennis Carter and John Paul decided to leave, replaced by singer-guitarist Bill Bramwell and bass player Lennie Harrison. Whitehouse, Carter and Paul, with the addition of Little Joey on washboard, reformed as The Court Jesters.

Now busy touring (reports suggested that "their inexperience was evident") the McDevitt group were on the first of the BBC Light Programme's 'Saturday Skiffle Club' on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1957.

'Green back dollar', out on Oriole that month, had another Nancy Whiskey vocal and although not as big a hit as 'Freight train' it still made the top thirty. But by late summer Nancy, never happy in a skiffle group, had decided to return to her folk roots as a solo artist and Tony Kohn (from The Cotton Pickers) who had recently joined the group took the lead vocals, while Charles auditioned a reported 1000 girls looking for a replacement. He finally chose 19 year old Shirley Douglas from Belfast. Born on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1938, she had, since the age of 13, been part of the family act The Douglas Trio (violin, cello and guitar), working all across Ireland.

Shirley's stage debut with the group was on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 1957 at Guildford's New Ballroom and another new feature were the boys' matching ties and pale blue sweaters with the initial 'M'. Next day it was a Sunday concert at the Ryde Commodore on the Isle of Wight.

Shirley broadcast on 'Guitar Club' with the group on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> and they were on BBC TV's 'Tonight' programme the following Wednesday.

On the road the group were kept busy with weeks in variety interlaced with one night stands. During October they were touring the North of England in a Daily Express sponsored 'Rhythm with the Stars' package that included glamorous singer Yana. At the beginning of December the group did a 1000 mile tour that played seven concerts in seven days. Beginning at Lewisham Town Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup> it took in Bexhill, Southampton, Tunbridge Wells, Margate and Leicester, ending at Bristol's Colston Hall on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Also on the tour were Don Lang's Frantic Five, Les Hobeaux, The City Ramblers, East Street Skiffle Group and The Cotton Pickers.

Investing some of the income from his success Chas. McDevitt opened his own coffee bar in 1958 at 44 Berwick Street, Soho, appropriately named 'Freight Train'. He celebrated by making an Embassy EP titled 'Skiffle Session' credited to the Coffee Bar Skifflers (The group also appeared on Embassy as the Cranes Skiffle Group). It was in the Freight Train coffee bar, at midnight on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1958, that Shirley and Charles announced their engagement.

McDevitt created something of a stir when he appeared at the Tin Pan Alley Ball in October without his distinctive 'trade-mark' beard. He said he'd shaved it off because some fans had told him it made him look old, but he soon grew it back again when Shirley complained and promoter Arthur Fox threatened to cancel the group's Stockton Hippodrome pantomime if he appeared without it. The panto was 'Robin Hood' which starred Marty Wilde in the title role. Shirley was credited as being an excellent Maid Marion, with the rest of the group playing the Merry Men. Competition over at Stockton's Globe Theatre was from another skiffler, Lonnie Donegan in 'Aladdin'.

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1959 was quite a day for Charles. He played football in the morning for the Show-business XI down in Surrey and then dashed back to town to marry Shirley at St.Patrick's Church, Soho Square in the afternoon. Italian singer Toni Dalli sung 'Ave Maria' at the service. For a honeymoon they had to be content with a 10 week season on the Isle of Man from June.

When the 'skiffle' bubble finally burst and the group disbanded, Charles and Shirley continued to play as a duo in variety, clubs and did several foreign tours throughout the sixties and seventies. They did regular summer seasons at resorts up and down the country.

Even now skiffle is not totally dead and Chas with an irregular group is kept busy on the cabaret circuit playing the old numbers and a few new ones. Occasionally to be heard singing with the band nowadays is daughter Kerry. To satisfy a new generation of skiffle fans (and a large number of old ones who like to remember the great years of their youth) Chas. has recently written 'Skiffle', the story of a 'craze' that has never really died.

Chas. McDevitt Skiffle Group Recordings

ORIOLE

CB 1352 Jan 57 'Freight train (v. *Nancy Whiskey*) /  
The  
cotton song'  
CB 1357 Mar 57 'It takes a worried man (v. *Jimmy  
MacGregor*) /  
The house of  
the rising sun'  
CB 1371 Jun 57 'Green back dollar (v. *Nancy Whiskey*) /  
I'm  
satisfied'  
CB 1386 Sep 57 'Face in the rain (v. *Nancy Whiskey*) /  
Sporting life (v.  
*Tony Kohn*)'  
CB 1395 Nov 57 'My old man / Sing sing sing (v. *Tony  
Kohn*)'  
CB 1403 Dec 57 'Johnny-O (v. *Nancy Whiskey*) /  
Bad man  
Stack-o-Lee'  
CB 1405 Feb 58 'Across the bridge (v. *Shirley Douglas*) /  
Deep down'  
CB 1457 Sep 58 'Real love (v. *Shirley Douglas*) /  
Juke  
box jumble'  
CB 1511 Sep 59 'Teenage letter / Sad little girl (v.  
*Shirley  
Douglas with Gordon  
Franks Group*)'  
EMBASSY (labelled as *The Cranes Skiffle Group*)  
WB 223 Feb 57 'Banana boat song / Don't you rock  
me  
daddy-o (v. *Alex  
Whitehouse*)'  
WB 238 May 57 'Freight train / Cumberland gap  
TOP RANK (plus session musicians dir by *Johnny  
Douglas*)  
Jar 338 Apl 60 'Dream talk (v. *Shirley Douglas*) /  
Forever'  
H.M.V. (plus session musicians)  
POP 845 61 'Can it be love / One love'  
POP 928 61 'I've got a thing about you /  
Mommy  
out de light'  
POP 999 62 'Throwing pebbles in the pool /  
Happy family'  
POP 1151 63 'I never will marry / Cruel love'  
COLUMBIA  
DB 7595 65 'The most of what I'd least / Don't  
blame me'  
DB 7703 65 'Don't believe them / Where am I  
going'  
DB 7846 66 'When the good times come /  
Never wed  
an old man'  
FONTANA  
H 957 Jly 68 (and *Shirley Douglas*) 'One man band /  
City smoke'  
PRESIDENT  
PT 376 72 'Freight train / Snowbird'  
PT 410 Nov 73 'Amazing grace / A boy child is born'

## Bill McGuffie

Bill was voted this country's top pianist year

after year during the 1950's, and he did it with just nine fingers. He lost the other one in an argument with a phone box door when he was eight. You might consider this some handicap to a pianist, but it didn't stop young William winning a gold medal for his playing from Scotlands' Victoria College when he was still only twelve. Some achievement for a anyone of that age with ten fingers.

A Scotsman from Carmyle near Glasgow, he was born in December 1927 and while at college also studied trombone, violin and saxophone. Something of an all-rounder you might say, so it's not surprising he became a notable arranger and composer too.

During his early teens Bill made some broadcasts over the Scottish Region and went on to play in several north of the border bands including the BBC Scottish Variety orchestra. Still not sure of his future Bill began training as a naval architect, but when a chance to join the Miff Hobson band in Ayr came along, the decision to follow a music career was made. It wasn't long before he had moved to London where, after a short period with Teddy Foster, Bill joined the Joe Loss Orchestra in July 1946, staying almost four years.

In March 1950 Bill began freelancing and while working as a rehearsal pianist was spotted by Philip Green who recommended him for the role of pianist in the film 'Murder without Crime', on which Phil was musical director. With Phil Green's orchestra Bill recorded the theme from the film, 'Song of Soho' for Columbia. Bill then made an L.P and several singles for the Vogue label.

On radio Bill was heard solo on 'Piano Playtime' and with bass and drums played regular early morning music. During the early fifties he had spells with Maurice Winnick at Ciro's Club, played with Frank Weir and spent over a year with Sydney Lipton. But his biggest break came in April 1953 when he joined Cyril Stapleton's BBC Show Band. He broadcast extensively with that fine outfit and was also responsible for much of the arranging.

In May 1953 he made some private recordings of himself on piano with Jock Cummings drums, Art Learner bass and (unusually) a harp played by Marie Korchinska. These he offered to Parlophone and they liked them and issued them as they were (they were the first 'outside' recordings to appear in Parlophone's general catalogue).

Bill remained with the Show Band until July 1955, during which time he also played in Kenny Baker's Dozen and other outfits. After a short holiday cum business trip to the States he joined a variety tour, 'Stars from the Show Band', with Ray Burns and others that kept him busy through till Christmas.

By now that US visit was proving positive with Bill contracted to write film scores for M.G.M. and he began to spend quite a lot of time hopping back and forth across the Atlantic. He wrote some of the music for Jayne Mansfield's 1960 film 'Too Hot To Handle' and appeared in it as a night club entertainer. He also wrote music for other Hollywood films including 'The Tender Trap' and 'Kismet'. Back home he continued to make concert and variety appearances and had a regular radio series, 'Our Kind of Music' with

singer Julie Dawn and 'Once in a While' with June Marlow.

During the summer of 1958 he joined a six piece group led by Johnnie Gray at the May Fair Hotel and remained there with his own Quartet until February 1959. Freelance work world-wide, mainly in film and television, kept Bill busy until his untimely death at Chertsey, Surrey on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1987.

Bill McGuffie Recordings  
COLUMBIA

DX 1702 Jan 51 (*piano soloist with Phil Green Orch*)  
'Song of Soho'  
(two parts)

VOGUE (*Bill McGuffie Quartet*)

V 2117 Jun 52 'The carioca / Make believe'  
V 2140 Dec 52 'Chopsticks (*Trio*) / Stardust'  
V 2151 Dec 52 'I wished on the moon / Sear little  
cafe'  
V 2152 Dec 52 'Isle of Capri / More than you know  
(*Trio*)'

(*on following two discs he backs singer  
Kathran Oldfield*)

V 9036 52 'A little love / Your guiding hand'  
V 9037 52 'Peace of mind / I go for you'  
V 9038 Oct 52 (*Trio*) 'Donkey serenade /  
The touch of  
your lips'

PARLOPHONE

R 3676 May 53 (*Quartet including harp*) 'You've done  
something to my heart / Dancing  
on the ceiling'

R 3707 Jly 53 (*Trio*) 'Begin the beguine /

Concerto for boogie'

R 3721 Aug 53 'Limelight / Ruby'  
R 3741 Sep 53 (*Quartet*) 'Love / Ebb tide'  
R 3848 Apl 54 'From the vine came the grape /  
Wanderlust'

PHILIPS (*Bill McGuffie and his Music*)

PB 356 Oct 54 'Smile / On the waterfront'  
PB 365 Nov 54 'Song of the sea / Jamie'  
PB 425 Mar 55 'My foolish heart / Memory'  
PB 429 Apl 55 'Dance of Granada / La mer'  
PB 483 Jly 55 (*with orch*) 'John and Julie / On the  
contrary'  
PB 496 Oct 55 (*with rhythm*) 'Hey there /  
Hernando's

hideaway'  
PB 529 Dec 55 'Autumn leaves / Theme from  
Clavioline

Concerto (*with*

*Jack Moore*)'

PB 555 Feb 56 (*with Marie Benson*) 'Oh! what a day /  
One girl,  
one boy'

PB 584 Apl 56 'No other love / A sunny day'  
PB 631 Oct 56 (*with orch*) 'Eleventh Hour melody /

Piano ballet'

PB 680 Apl 57 'Almost paradise / I'll find you'  
PB 706 Jly 57 'Enchanted island / Small town blues'  
PB 922 May 59 'Simple Simon / Elmer's tune'  
BF 1100 61 'Harry's harmonica / During one  
night'  
BF 1111 61 'Naomi / The secret'  
? Mar 62 'Give seven / Out of cigarettes'  
326575 63 'The fairground waltz / The winter  
waltz'  
BF 1550 67 'Fugue for thought / Fair's fair'

## Kenneth McKELLAR

Known as the 'Voice of Scotland', Kenneth, a brawny Scot, was born at Paisley on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1927. He initially trained in forestry at Aberdeen University, gaining a BSc, but then went to the Royal College of Music for four years.

With a repertoire that ranged from the classics through operetta to popular music, with an emphasis on the latter, by the early fifties Ken was fast becoming something of a celebrity around his homeland. He played in pantomime and was one of the mainstays in that pillar of variety north of the border, 'Five (later Half) Past Eight' at Glasgow's Alhambra. At the same theatre during the early sixties Kenneth played several winter seasons in the much remembered Christmas show 'A Wish for Jamie'. On radio he had his own series 'A Song for Everyone', that later transferred over to television.

By the mid-fifties he had become almost as well known south of the border where, dressed in his tartan kilt, he guested on many television variety shows and later had another series 'At Home with Kenneth McKellar'. Kenneth's fame not only travelled to England, but spread world-wide taking him on tours of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He appeared several times at the London Palladium and recorded the sound-track for the film 'The Great Waltz'. A great fun lover and practical joker, he was still entertaining his many fans around the world well into the nineties.

Kenneth began recording on Parlophone's Scottish series in 1952 and later had a long association with Decca.

Kenneth McKellar Recordings

PARLOPHONE

F 3429 Mar 52 'Ae fond kiss / My ain house'  
F 3433 Jun 52 'Bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle / The  
rowan tree'  
F 3441 Nov 52 'The border ballad / The auld house'  
F 3487 Oct 54 'The mist covered mountains of home /

Corn rigs'  
DECCA

F 10342 Jly 54 'Dream Angus / My song'  
F 10360 Aug 54 'The thistle o' Scotland / A dream o'  
hame'  
F 10396 Oct 54 'Far away isle / Come home to the  
Highlands'  
F 10537 Jun 55 'Scotland the brave / Loch Lomand'  
F 10655 Nov 55 'My love is like a red, red rose / My  
ain folk'  
F 10744 May 56 'Cameron lad / Bonnie  
Strathearn'  
F 10811 Nov 56 'The old house / Rothesay Bay'  
F 10836 Jan 57 'Ring the bluebells of Scotland /  
Phil the

Fluter's ball'  
F 10901 May 57 'Skye boat song / Lewis bridal  
song'  
F 10920 Jly 57 'Mandolin serenade / The  
Cameronians'  
F 10960 Nov 57 'Uist tramping song / Granny's  
Highland hame'  
F 11022 May 58 'It's a long, long way to Tipperary  
/

Song of  
the Clyde'  
F 11064 Oct 58 'Keep right on to the end of the road /

Born on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1909, he was encouraged to be a musician from an early age by his stepfather George Hartley, violinist-conductor and musical director for the Charles Gulliver Theatre Company. At the age of four George had a small violin to practice on and gave his first public violin performance when only 12. At the age of 14 he won a scholarship to Trinity College of Music, where he attained several awards and became proficient on no less than eight different

instruments.

By the age of 18 he was already broadcasting on Station 2LO from Savoy Hill, London. He played in several hotel and club bands and led his own at the Cafe de Paris and Quaglino's, but spent much of the 1930's with the famous Savoy Hotel Orpheans. As well as his musical ability George was no mean vocalist and many orchestra leaders took advantage of this fact on stage and record.

George first recorded as an instrumentalist with Geoffrey Gelder and his Kettner Five in 1926 on the Imperial label. His first vocal efforts to be captured on disc are probably those with Jay Wilbur's Band on Victory Records in 1930. He also played and sang on recording sessions during the thirties with Jack Jackson, Van Phillips, Marius B Winter and the Savoy Orpheans.

With the outbreak of World War Two, George joined the army as a military policeman and P.T. instructor. Following an injury to his back he was transferred, with the rank of R.S.M., to the War Office and became musical director of Army Broadcasting. He was instrumental in forming the British Band of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, working alongside the American and Canadian A.E.F. Bands led by Major Glenn Miller and Captain Robert Farnon. Leading such a band, where size was not too much of a problem, allowed George to experiment with large orchestra arrangements including big string sections, all to prove very valuable back in civvy street. While he was in the services his former wife and two sons were killed in an air raid.

When George left the army he thought the A.E.F. Band too good to fade away, so he contacted as many members as possible and the Melachrino Organization was formed. By sheer coincidence its offices were in the same Albemarle Street premises from which his father once ran the tobacco business. Consisting of the Melachrino Strings, the large Melachrino Orchestra plus the smaller 16 piece Masqueraders that specialised in light music, initial bookings were slow and life often hard with players some weeks receiving little or no pay at all. But most members stuck it out and things gradually improved.

Deputy conductor to George in the army band had been Eric Robinson and he became one of the driving forces behind the Melachrino Organization. Having worked in BBC Television before the war Eric rejoined the service as musical director in 1947 and from then on, until about 1953, almost all musical output on television was provided by Melachrino Organization members. The Melachrino Orchestra also made numerous radio broadcasts and featured on a late forties Radio Luxembourg series sponsored by Horlicks.

During 1947 the orchestra aired on the series 'Music Time' and joined Joyce Grenfell on 'Note with Music'. George wrote the music for the Eric Maschwitz - Matt Brooks show 'Starlight Roof' that opened at the London Hippodrome on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1947 starring Vic Oliver, Pat Kirkwood, Fred Emney and introduced a very young Julie Andrews. George scored several forties films including 'Forbidden', 'The Shop on Sly Corner', 'Now Barabbas', 'No Orchids For Miss Blandish', 'The Story of Shirley Yorke' and 'First Rhapsody'.

He appeared in the 1948 film thriller 'House of Darkness' and the orchestra were in the 1950 comedy 'Old Mother Riley, Headmistress'.

The Melachrino Strings appeared on the Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1948. In a show peppered with seasoned professionals like Ted Ray, Arthur Askey and Danny Kaye, the unexpected 'star turn' of the evening came from 13 year old Julie Andrews.

In October 1949 George was appointed musical director of M.G.M's Leicester Square Empire Theatre, which had adopted a cine-variety policy. For over three years he was responsible for providing the music, writing much of it himself, for four stage shows a day between films, until the theatre management decided for tax reasons to drop stage shows and reverted to films only early in 1952. In 1955 George was back at Leicester Square Empire conducting for the revue 'Showboat Time'. He regularly led the orchestra accompanying visiting American artists, including Yma Sumac, the girl with the multi-octave voice, and pianist Liberace. During the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels he was there as Britain's guest conductor.

The Melachrino Orchestra also made many records, with their popularity in the States even greater than at home. The music, once described as "a poultice for bad nerves", was released over there on L.P's with titles like 'Music For Faith', 'Music for Reading', 'Music to Make You Sleep', 'Inner Calm' etc. George often visited the U.S. on promotional tours and during the fifties, along with Mantovani, was probably the best known British musician in the States. Early in May 1956 the American's presented him with a gold disc for over a million L.P. sales and he displayed it to viewers of ITV's 'On the Town' show on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The orchestra was back on radio in 1959, after a long absence, with a new Sunday series 'Melody Hour'.

George continued touring a 60 piece orchestra, including visits to North and South America, and remained busy in the recording studio until suffering an untimely death on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1965, when he apparently fell asleep in his bath and drowned, aged only 56.

Melachrino Orchestra / Strings Recordings  
(S) = Melachrino Strings (O) = Melachrino Orchestra

#### COLUMBIA

DX1256 Jly 46 (O) 'Break of day / Ballade for orchestra'

#### PARLOPHONE

RO 20556 Oct 47 (O) (with Richard Tauber) 'Oh, what a beautiful morning / They say it's wonderful'

RO 20557 Dec 47 (O) (with Richard Tauber) 'Which way does the wind blow /

There is no end'

E11461 Jun 48 (O) (with Luton Girls Choir) 'You are my hearts delight / My

heart and I'

R 3118 Jly 48 (O) (with Luton Girls Choir) 'Break of day /

		Count		Song of the	
your blessings'				mountains'	
H.M.V.	(C prefix = 12 inch 78rpm)			B 9777 May 49 (O) (with Webster Booth) 'If you are there /	
B 9515 Dec 46 (S) 'Indian summer / Begin the beguine'				Tis the day'	
B 9525 Jan 47 (S) 'El Relicario / Estrellita'				C 3877 Jun 49 (O) 'Ante el Escorial / Dance Mexicaïne'	
B 9527 Feb 47 (O) 'Liebestraum / Winter sunshine'				B 9781 Jly 49 (S) 'Fascination / Campana a sera'	
B 9535 Mar 47 (S) 'Vision d`amour (theme from film Woman				B 9805 Oct 49 (O) 'Theme waltz (from film Dark Secret) /	
		to			La
Woman) / Dusk'				vie en rose'	
C 3570 May 47 (O) 'First rhapsody / Autumn'				B 9843 Dec 49 (S) 'Waltz from The Waltz Dream /	
B 9554 Jun 47 (S) 'Poeme / Masquerade'				Clopin clopant'	
B 9564 Jly 47 (S) 'The Pink Lady waltz / Out of my dreams'				C 3891 Aug 49 (O) 'La paloma / Festival'	
C 3594 Aug 47 (O) 'Memories of the Ballet' (two parts)				C 3909 Sep 49 (O) 'Selection from the film Words and Music'	
B 9580 Sep 47 (S) 'Intermezzo Cavalleria Rusticana /				C 3929 Nov 49 (O) (with Monia Liter piano) 'Rhapsody in	
		Serenade			blue
(Schubert)'				(two parts)'	
C 3627 Oct 47 (O) 'Dance of the hours / La gloconda'				B 9862 Jan 50 (S) 'Mattinata / Cascade of stars'	
B 9591 Nov 47 (S) 'The donkey serenade /				C 3957 Feb 50 (O) 'selection from film Look For the Silver	
		They didn` t			Lining : Wild rose / Sally /
believe me'				Shine on	
C 3675 Dec 47 (O) 'Clair de lune / Greensleeves'					harvest moon / Time on my
B 9606 Jan 48 (O) (with Michael O`Duffy vocal) 'I`ll take you				hands / Sunny	
		home again Kathleen /		Avalon /	
The old house'					Look for the
B 9610 Jan 48 (O) 'Starlight Roof waltz / Zingara'				silver lining'	
B 9622 Feb 48 (S) 'Serenade / Serenata'				C 3961 Mar 50 (O) 'selection from film You`re My Everything	
C 3710 Mar 48 (O) 'Warsaw Concerto' (two parts) (William Hill-Bowen					: Varsity drag / I may be
on piano)				wrong / On the	
C 3723 Mar 48 (O) 'Ravel`s Bolero' (two parts)					good ship Lollipop / Ain`t she
B 9637 May 48 (O) 'Malaguena / (S) Lady of Spain'				sweet /	
B 9641 May 48 (O) (with Michael O`Duffy vocal) 'The old refrain /				charleston /	
My lagan love'					Would you like to take a
C3736 Jun 48 (O) 'Introduction and song of the orchid /				walk /	
		Dance d`extase' (both from			California
film		No Orchids for		here I come'	
Miss Blandish)				C 3962 Mar 50 (O) (with Webster Booth) 'An evening song /	
B 9658 Jly 48 (S) 'Kiss me again / By the sleepy lagoon'				The message'	
C 3775 Aug 48 (S) 'Air on a G string / Romance				B 9898 Apl 50 (S) 'La serenata / Berceuse de Jocelyn'	
(Rubinstein)'				C 3986 Jun 50 (O) 'selection from Dancing Years : Uniform /	
B 9678 Sep 48 (S) 'Moonlight serenade / Portrait of a lady'					I can give you the starlight /
B 9687 Oct 48 (O) 'Dream of Olwen (with William Hill-Bowen piano) / The way				Wings of	
to the stars'				you / Waltz of	
B 9692 Nov 48 (O) 'Le cygne (Saint Saens) /					my heart / Leap year
Woodland revel'				waltz'	
B 9706 Dec 48 (S) 'La Golondrina (The swallow) /				C 3992 Jly 50 (O) 'Carousel Fantasy : Carousel waltz / If I	
Destiny'					loved you / What`s the use of
B 9714 Jan 49 (S) (with chorus) 'In a monastery garden /				wonderin` /	
		Bells across			A real nice clambake / Mister
the meadow'				Snow /	
B 9723 Feb 49 (S) 'Stardust / Valse bluette'				asleep /	
B 9738 Mar 49 (O) (with Anne Ziegler & Webster Booth)					June is bustin`
		'Hear my song,		out all over'	
Violette /				C 4004 Aug 50 (O) 'Music from The Legend of Frankie and	
		Love`s last			Johnnie (a ballet by William
word is spoken'				Hill-Bowen)'	
B 9740 Mar 49 (S) 'Violins in the night /				B 9952 Sep 50 (S) 'September song / Autumn leaves'	
		Midnight		C 4022 Oct 50 (O) 'Cole Porter Fantasy : Just one of those	
in Mayfair'					things / What is this thing
B 9753 Apl 49 (S) 'Faithfully yours / Diane'					
B 9765 May 49 (O) 'The legend of the glass mountain /				called love /	

Easy to love /	You do something to me /	lucumi'	
	Night and day /	C 4103 Aug 51 (O)	'selection from Show Boat : Cotton blossom / Can` t help lovin`
Anything goes'		dat man /	
B 9981 Nov 50 (O)	'A Christmas Fantasy :		Why do I love you / Make
Christians awake		believe / Bill /	
	/ First Nowell / Jingle bells /		You are love / Ole
Home sweet		man river'	
	home / Good King	B 10118 Sep 51 (S)	'Too young / Visions of Delia'
Wenceslas / Come		B 10138 Oct 51 (O)	'Rhondda rhapsody / Love`s roundabout'
	landlord fill the flowing	C 4115 Oct 51 (O)	'Gershwin Fantasy : The man I love /
bowl / Girls and			Fascinating rhythm /
Mistletoe	boys / Ring a ring o` roses /		
	bough / Silent night'	Embraceable you /	
Christmas night'			Lisa / Summertime / Let`s call
C 4038 Nov 50 (O)	(with William Hill-Bowen piano)	the whole	
'Legend			thing off / Love walked in /
	(by Robert Docker) /	Rhapsody in	
Theme from			blue / I got
	Runnymede Rhapsody (by	rhythm'	
Reginald King)'		C 4121 Nov 51 (O)	'selection from South Pacific :
C 4045 Dec 50 (O)	'selection from the film Three	There is	
Little Words			nothin` like a dame / Some
	: I love you so much /	enchanted	
Nevertheless /			evening / I` m gonna wash that
	Who`s sorry now / Come on	man right	
papa /			outa my hair / I` m in love with
	Thinking of you / So long / My	a	
sunny			wonderful guy / Younger than
	Tennessee / All alone Monday	springtime	
/			/ Dites-moi /
	Three	Bali ha` i'	
little words'		C 4141 Dec 51 (S)	(with Peter Knight Singers) 'Ave
C 4062 Feb 51 (O)	'Irving Berlin selection : Easter	Maria /	
parade /			The
	Top hat / White tie and tails /	holy city'	
Remember /		B 10197 Jan 52 (S)	'Amoureuse / Charmaine'
	Slummin` on Park Avenue /	B 10207 Feb 52 (S)	'Waltz in C sharp minor / Domino'
I` ve got my		B 10230 Mar 52 (S)	'Tenderly / While we` re young'
	love to keep me warm / Heat	B 10295 Jly 52 (O)	(with Semprini) 'Tchaikovsky
wave /		piano	
	Because I love you / Blue		concerto / Grieg
skies / The song		piano concerto'	
	is ended / A pretty girl is like	B 10298 Jly 52 (S)	'Padam padam / Rosita'
a melody /		B 10314 Aug 52 (S)	'Flirtation waltz / Waltz of Paree'
		B 10330 Sep 52 (S)	'Meet Mister Callaghan /
Cheek to cheek'		Vanessa'	
C 4072 Mar 51 (O)	'selection from Kiss Me Kate :		(William Hill-Bowen soloist
Another		on	
	opening another show / So in	harpsichord)	
love / Too		B 10342 Oct 52 (O)	(with Semprini) 'Mansell concerto
behave / Bianca	darn hot / Why can` t you	/	
	/ Were thine that special		Theme from
face / Always		Mediterranean Concerto'	
	true to you in my fashion / So	B 10382 Dec 52 (S)	'Sleigh ride / Ecstasy'
in love'		C 4170 May 52 (O)	'selection from Bet Your Life : Bet
C 4079 Apl 51 (O)	'selection from Gay`s the Word :	your	
Bees are			life / Don` t look now / I love
	buzzin` / If only he` d looked	him as he is /	
my way / A			I want a great big hulk of
	matter of minutes / Finder	male / Farandole	
please return /			/ I love being in love / Now is
as this /	Gaiety glad / On such a night	the moment	
			/ All on account of a guy /
Vitality'		More music'	
B 10064 May 51 (O)	'Cinderella Film Fantasy Medley :	C 4171 Apl 52 (O)	'selection from Call Me Madam :
A		You` re just in	Washington Square dance /
	dream is a wish your heart		love / Marrying for love / The
makes / The		best thing	
	work song / Oh sweet		for you / They like Ike / Once
nightingale / So this		upon a time	
	is love / Bibbidi-bobbidi-bo /		today / It`s a lovely day today /
A dream is			
	a wish your	The Ocarina'	
heart makes'		C 4174 Jun 52 (O)	'Tchaikovsky fantasy (two parts)'
B 10087 Jun 51 (O)	'If you go / My song of spring'	C 4193 Nov 52 (O)	'selection from The Merry Widow :
C 4098 Jly 51 (O)	'Valse de concert Op.47 / Danza	Girls	



girls girls / Merry Widow  
waltz / Maxin`s /  
Ladie`s choice'  
B 10404 Jan 53 (S) 'Chanson de matin Op.15 No.2 / Esa  
es la mona'  
B 10426 Feb 53 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'Theme from The Last  
Rhapsody /  
Etude in D flat'  
C 4207 Feb 53 (O) 'Parade of film hits medley (two parts)'  
C 4211 Mar 53 (O) 'selection from Porgy and Bess  
(two parts)'  
B 10461 Apl 53 (S) 'The kiss / Little red monkey'  
B 10497 Jun 53 (S) 'Theme from film Limelight / April  
in Portugal'  
B 10515 Jly 53 (S) 'The waltzing bugle boy / Lately'  
B 10519 Aug 53 (S) 'The sword and the rose / La volta'  
B 10538 Sep 53 (S) 'A handful of stars / Mystery street'  
B 10552 Oct 53 (S) 'The Melba waltz / Golden violins'  
B 10579 Nov 53 (S) 'A girl called Linda / Park Avenue waltz'  
B 10608 Dec 53 (S) 'All my life / Scrub, brother, scrub'  
C 4223 53 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'Rhapsody for Elizabeth  
(two parts)'  
C 4245 53 (O) 'Noel Coward fantasy (two parts)'  
B 10616 Jan 54 (S) 'Theme from film Front Page Story /  
Close to  
my heart'  
B 10639 Feb 54 (S) 'The girl from Cuba / (O) A waltz in  
water colours'  
B 10648 Mar 54 (S) 'Blue room / Why do I love you'  
B 10657 Apl 54 (O) 'Simonetta / Butantan'  
B 10678 Apl 54 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'The story of three loves /  
The  
harmonica player'  
C 4250 May 54 (O) 'Cavatina / Les jeux'  
B 10738 Sep 54 (O) 'Theme from Modern Times (Smile) /  
Copenhagen polka'  
B 10764 Oct 54 (S) 'To a wild rose / Evensong'  
B 10770 Nov 54 (S) 'Pavements of Paris / Tyrolean tango'  
B 10784 Nov 54 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'La campanella /  
Hungarian march'  
C 4268 54 (O) 'selection from Kismet (two parts)'  
B 10811 Jan 55 (S) 'You`ll never walk alone / (O) Song  
of the sea'  
B 10822 Feb 55 (S) 'Prize of gold / In love, in love'  
C 4267 Apl 55 (O) 'selection from the film Deep In My Heart  
(two parts)'  
B 10903 Sep 55 (O) 'A kid for two farthings / The Lilly  
Watkins tune'  
C 4272 Oct 55 (O) 'selection from The Pajama Game  
(two parts)'  
B10928 Sep 55 (O) *(with Les Howard)* 'Blue star /  
Three galleons'  
B 10934 Nov 55 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'First rhapsody /

Chopin`s Tristesse'  
B 10935 Nov 55 (O) 'Uma casa Portuguesa / Beyond the  
blue horizon'  
C 4273 55 (O) 'selection from Summer Song (two parts)'  
C 4274 55 (O) 'selection from The Vagabond King  
(two parts)'  
C 4275 55 (O) 'selection from Guys and Dolls  
(two parts)'  
C 4276 55 (O) 'selection from The King and I (two parts)'  
B 10939 Jan 56 (S) 'A perfect day / Abide with me'  
B 10954 Jun 56 (O) 'Paris metro / Paris promenade'  
B 10958 Sep 56 (O) 'Autumn concerto / A woman in love'  
7P 262 60 (O) *(with Ronald Chesney)* 'Slaughter on  
Tenth Avenue  
(two parts)'  
7P 310 62 (O) *(with Semprini)* 'Rachmaninov`s 18th  
Variation / Theme from The  
Last  
Rhapsody'

## George MELLY

Still making the occasional appearance, up until he died, George could look back on a lifetime of singing the blues in and out of show-business. Born at Liverpool in 1926 it all really began in 1948 when, having left the navy and working as a salesman in a London art gallery, he joined the newly formed Mick Mulligan jazz band, where his blues 'shouting' style proved a popular attraction. George continued to appear with Mulligan throughout the fifties, while occasionally singing with other jazz bands and making solo appearances. He also developed his flair for writing, supplying the story line for the Daily Mail cartoon strip 'Flook', drawn by fellow jazzman Wally Fawkes.

He wrote some film scripts and books about art. In fact despite being voted the unexpected top male vocalist in late fifties Melody Maker band polls, he more-or-less gave up show-business to pursue a journalistic career, although he did continue to gig with various bands.

By the mid-seventies George was back singing full time, working with John Chilton`s Feetwarmers, including tours across Europe, America, Australia and China. He made numerous records, including a version of 'Rock island line' that pre-dated the famous Lonnie Donegan disc by four years.

George`s last public appearance, in a very frail state - he had been suffering from lung cancer for some time - was a tribute concert in June 2007 at the 100 Club in Oxford Street, London, where it had all begun some sixty years before. He died peacefully a month later.

George Melly Recordings

TEMPO *(all with Mick Mulligan band unless stated)*

A 65 Jly 50 'Pleading for the blues / Take me for a  
buggy ride'

A 66 Aug 50 'Candy lips'  
A 72 Sep 50 'Root doctor'  
A 96 Nov 51 (GM Trio) 'Send me to the electric chair /  
Rock  
island line'  
A 104 Jun 52 'Jazzbo Brown from Memphis town /  
Kitchen man'  
A 144 Jly 56 'Jenny`s ball / Muddy water'  
A 147 Nov 56 'Cemetery blues / Death letter'

DECCA (with Mick Mulligan band)

F 10457 Feb 55 'Frankie and Johnny / I`m down in the dumps'  
F 10763 Jly 56 'I`m a ding dong daddy / Kingdom coming'  
F 10779 Sep 56 'Railroadin` man / Waiting for a train'  
F 10806 Oct 56 'My canary has circles under his eyes /  
Heebie jeebies'  
F 10840 Jan 57 'Black bottom / Magnolia'  
F 11115 Feb 59 'Abdul Abulbul Amir /  
Get away old man  
get away'  
PYE  
N 15253 Feb 60 'Ise a muggin' / Run come see Jerusalem'

COLUMBIA

DB 4664 61 'Funny feathers / (with Bill Bramwell)  
Monkey and  
the baboon'  
WARNER BROTHERS

K 16249 72 'Sam Jones blues / Nuts'  
K 16355 Mar 74 'Good time George /  
My canary has circles  
under his eyes'  
K 16532 75 'Ain`t misbehavin` /  
My canary has circles  
under his eyes'  
K 16574 Jun 75 'I long to get it on down / Inflation blues'

REPRISE

K 14453 Nov 76 'Pennies from heaven / Punch and Judy'  
P.R.T.

7P 268 Apl 83 'Makin` whoopie / Everybody loves my baby'  
7P 318 Oct 84 'It`s the bluest kind of blues /  
Masculine women,  
feminine women'  
PYS 14 Aug 88 'Anything goes / September song'

## Felix MENDELSSOHN

More of a showman than a musician, Felix put his energy into entertaining the public rather than making money. He certainly succeeded in the former, ending up with very little of the latter.

London born in 1911, he always claimed to be a direct descendant of the famous composer, but this was just early signs of his PR skills. It was expected that Felix would follow his father into the Stock Exchange, but he had other ideas and at age 17, craving adventure, joined the navy. It

was in this role that he visited the South Seas and had his first taste of island magic and tropical rhythm.

After leaving the service and again looking for something new he began playing character parts in touring revues, before opening his own Club Felix in London`s West End. This became a popular haunt of 1930`s theatrical folk and listening to their tales of woe and disaster Felix was always full of ways for sorting their problems. He then hit upon the idea of selling himself as a publicist to the show-business profession.

One of the first to hire Felix was bandleader Harry Roy who later told of the elaborate stunts Felix would think up to publicise the band. It was Felix who made such an event of Harry`s marriage to Princess Pearl of Sarawak, ensuring a wedding that blocked London`s streets and filled all the papers. He worked for many other musicians too, including Mantovani, Sydney Lipton, Joe Loss, Lew Stone and Carroll Gibbons. Felix also ran a theatrical agency with Harry Roy`s brother Syd.

From show-business publicist to show-business performer was the obvious next step, but Felix, with his speech stammer and on his own admission "limited musical ability", knew that to succeed he needed an act that was "different". Initially he led a dance band that had little success, despite broadcasts over the pre-war commercial stations Normandy and Luxembourg. It was in 1938 that he had the brilliant idea of forming his Hawaiian Serenaders, native singers and musicians who played lilting melodies on guitars while pretty girls in grass skirts shook their hips to the rhythms. The fact that most of them had been no further south than the Isle of Wight did not spoil the illusion and in no time the Serenaders were entrancing audiences around the country. Felix always played a low key but impressive role, dressed in a white suit and never without a garland of flowers around his neck, he quietly let his soloists and dancers sell the show. All quite innocent by today`s standards, but the Serenaders were refused permission to tour Ireland in 1950 for fear the hula dancers would corrupt public morals!

The band often had some excellent musicians like Harry Brooker on electric guitar and Roland Peachey on steel guitar with vocalists that included George Barclay, Beri Shaw, Louisa Moy (one of the few true Hawaiians - her husband Pola Moi played guitar in the band) and Kealoha Life. They made numerous records on Parlophone and Columbia. Throughout the early forties hardly a month went by without a new one being issued.

During the war years Felix spent time in the Life Guards, but also regularly broadcast with his Serenaders on the series 'Song of the Islands' and later on 'Hawaii Calling' that featured singer Rita Williams. The Serenaders appeared in the 1944 comedy film 'Demobbed' with comic Nat Jackley and they joined Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan in their 1951 comedy romp 'Penny Points to Paradise'. They toured widely in variety and broadcast on shows like 'Workers Playtime', 'Variety Bandbox' and 'Music for the Housewife' all helping to keep them popular.

With such a large group, near to fifty, to pay and

transport from theatre to theatre cash was always a problem and the show continued mainly due to the determination and organising skills of Felix himself. During 1946 the theatre chain Moss Empires stopped booking him because he accepted TV dates, but relented a year later. Another slight problem occurred in October 1949 when Felix and his singer George Barclay were sued for damages at Loughborough County Court by Walter Broad, a 34 year old local resident. He claimed £43-3s-6d compensation for loss of earnings when he was off work recovering from injuries sustained when Barclay fell off the stage at Loughborough Town Hall and landed on him. Poor Walter received another blow in court, because the judge found in favour of Felix and George, awarding them costs as well.

The Serenaders fame spread throughout Europe and they made several tours across the continent. On a visit to Holland in January 1950 the expenses outstripped fees received, leaving the whole company stranded without the fare back to England. Ever resourceful Felix negotiated with a local British Army camp that, in exchange for giving free shows to the servicemen, they received overnight accommodation and transport back across the channel.

Problems like this obviously took their toll on Felix and over the years he suffered several periods of ill health, occasionally leaving the Serenaders to carry on without him. By October 1950 health problems had forced him to give up touring all together, but he continued to broadcast with the band. In December he entered Charing Cross Hospital to undergo an operation for "glandular problems" and after a period of convalescence went back on the road in May 1951. But all was obviously not well because Felix, still a bachelor, died on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1952 aged only forty. The funeral at Golders Green cemetery included organ music written by his 19<sup>th</sup> century namesake. Many of the Serenaders returned to the road for a while, promoted by bandleader-songwriter Billy Reid, as The Esme Lee Islanders.

During the forties the adventures (fictional) of Felix and his band in the South Seas appeared as a picture strip in the weekly 'Radio Fun' comic. Possibly the only bandleader to be awarded this dubious honour!

One of the stars of the Serenaders was Hawaiian guitarist-vocalist Kealoha Life (pronounced lee-fay) who was really London born Alfred Randall. During World War Two he began fronting his own Hawaiian band touring dance halls and service camps. Later he lived and worked in South Africa and America, but eventually returned to Britain and died at Cardiff in September 2006.

Felix Mendelssohn Hawaiian Serenaders recordings from 1940

PARLOPHONE (From the Florida Club)

F 1617 Jan 40 'Strange enchantment / We'll meet again'  
F 1642 Feb 40 'Twelfth Street rag / Limehouse blues'  
F 1663 Mar 40 'La paloma / La rosita'  
F 1690 Apl 40 'Who's taking you home tonight /

You made

me care'  
F 1696 Jun 40 'Tristesste (So deep is the night) / Au revoir'  
F 1722 Jly 40 'Song of the islands / Tango love songs'

COLUMBIA

FB 2452 Jly 40 'Cuban romeo / It happened in Kaloha (both v. George Barclay)'

FB 2462 Aug 40 'Hawaii Goes To Town : China boy - Sweet Sue

- I never knew (vocal trio) / Rumba Rhythm : Siboney - Cuban Pete - Mama Inez (v. G B)'

FB 2494 Oct 40 'Tiger rag / Goodbye blues'

FB 2501 Nov 40 'Hawaiian Gems : When you dream about

Hawaii - Drifting and dreaming -

Aloma - Hula

jazz - Kalua - On the beach at

Waikiki'

(v. The Hawaiian Sisters)

FB 2525 Dec 40 'Japanese sandman / Lady be good'

FB 2542 Jan 41 'Kiss me again / Moon of Manakoora (v. George Barclay)'

FB 2559 Feb 41 'Yaaka hula hicky dula (v. GB & H S) / To you sweetheart

aloha (v. G B)'

FB 2575 Mar 41 'Chant of the jungle (v. G B & H S) / The Sheik of

Araby'

FB 2584 Apl 41 'Pagan love song (v. G B) / Song of the rose'

FB 2605 May 41 'La cumparsita / Julian'

FB 2618 Jun 41 'Pearls from Hawaii No.1 : A little rendezvous

in Honolulu - Blue Hawaii -

Goodbye Hawaii -

King's serenade - South sea island

magic -

On a little bamboo bridge' (v.

Barry Gray)

FB 2633 Jly 41 'Moonlight and roses / Say si-si (both v. Barry Gray)'

Gray)

FB 2644 Aug 41 'Pearls from Hawaii No.2 : On treasure island -

On the beach at Bali Bali - Linger

longer island

- Honolulu - Sweet Leilani - Little heaven of

the seven seas' (v. Barry

Gray)

FB 2667 Sep 41 'In the mood / I got rhythm'

FB 2690 Oct 41 'Song of the islands / Aloha oe (both v.

Kealoha Life)'

FB 2699 Nov 41 'Cherokee / Love's last word is spoken

(v. Mervyn

Saunders)'

FB 2719 Dec 41 'Indian love call / Speak to me of love (v.

Alan Kane)'

FB 2739 Jan 42 'By the waters of Minnetonka (v. Alan Kane) /

Cielito lindo (v.

Keoloha Life)'

FB 2753 Feb 42 'Solitude / Mood indigo'

FB 2772 Mar 42 'Love everlasting (v. Alan Kane) / La cucaracha (v in Spanish.

Kealoha Life)'

FB 2783 May 42 'La cumparsa Cubanas /

Lover come

back to me'

FB 2798 May 42	'Whispering / Hula blues'	FB 3116 Jun 45	'Romantic waltzes No.4 : Love`s dream after the
FB 2828 Aug 42	'Hawaiian memories No.1 : I`d like to see		ball - Destiny - Gold and silver -
	Samoa of Samoa - My isle of	Melody in F -	Hearts and flowers -
golden dreams -	South Sea lullabies - Sophisticated	Evensong'	
hula -	Hawaiian paradise - In a little hula	FB 3127 Aug 45	'Hawaiian memories No.6 : Forget me not - My
heaven'			Honolulu hula girl - Weave a lei -
FB 2840 Sep 42	'Hawaiian memories No.2 : Palms of	Down on	the Ami Oni Isle - Little brown girl -
paradise -	Moonlight in Waikiki - Lovelight in	On the	beach at Waikiki' (v. <i>Kealoha Life</i> )
the	starlight - On a cocoanut island -	FB 3135 Sep 45	'Lullaby (Brahms) / Toselli`s
The one rose	- Moonlight and shadows'	Serenade'	
FB 2855 Oct 42	'Where the waters are blue / Sing	FB 3145 Oct 45	'Goodbye Hawaii / My isle of golden dreams
me a song	of the islands (v.		(both v. <i>Nadia Dore`s</i>
<i>George Barclay</i> )'		<i>Debonaires</i> )'	
FB 2871 Dec 42	'Waltz time in Hawaii : Paradise -	FB 3152 Nov 45	'Hawaiian memories No.7 : Rhythm of the
Sleepy lagoon	- On Miami shore - A little love, a		waves - Dancing under the stars - I
little kiss -	A kiss in the dark - One kiss'	wonder	where my hula girl has gone - Hula
FB 2882 Feb 43	'St. Louis blues / Crazy rhythm'	lullaby -	The white blossoms of Tahni - Blue
FB 2895 Mar 43	'Dinah / Nobody`s sweetheart'	shadows	and white
FB 2905 Apl 43	'Romantic waltzes No.1 : Sweet	gardenias'	
mystery of life -	When Irish eyes are smiling -	FB 3163 Dec 45	'Santa Lucia / Blue sky'
Love`s old sweet	song - Marcheta - It happened in	FB 3171 Jan 46	'Rose of Santa Luzia (v. <i>Cyril Shane</i> ) / My old Hawaiian home (v.
Monterey -		<i>Louisa Moe</i> )'	
Missouri waltz'		FB 3198 Apl 46	'Paradise isle (v. <i>Nadia Dore`s</i>
FB 2925 Jun 43	'Hawaiian memories No.3 : Soft green	<i>Debonaires</i> ) /	
seas -	Sweet Hawaiian chimes - Rhythm	Wabash blues'	
of the	islands - My little grass shack in	FB 3224 Jly 46	'Beautiful dreamer / A million moons
Kealakehua -	Mi nei - On moonlight bay'	over Hawaii'	
FB 2942 Aug 43	'Hawaiian love (v. <i>Louisa Moe</i> ) /	FB 3235 Sep 46	'Carefree waltzes / Kalua lullaby'
Maui waltz'		FB 3246 Oct 46	'Pretty red hibiscus (v. <i>Nadia Dore`s</i>
FB 2957 Oct 43	'Roses of Picardy / Chez moi (both v,	Hilo march'	<i>Debonaires</i> ) /
<i>Helen Clare</i> )'		FB 3254 Nov 46	'Romantic waltzes No.5 : Skater`s
FB 2975 Dec 43	'Romantic waltzes No.2 : Love	waltz -	Dolores - Pomone - Tales from the
serenade - Poem	- Love`s dream - Demande et reponse	Vienna	woods -Vienna blood - The blue
	- Kisses	Danube'	
	in the dark -	FB 3271 Jan 47	'Indian summer (v. <i>George Barclay</i> ) /
	Fascination'	Woodpecker song'	
FB 2991 Feb 44	'In the still of the night / Tonight'	FB 3280 Feb 47	'Caravan / Farewell blues'
FB 3007 Apl 44	'Hawaiian memories No.4 : My isle on	FB 3295 May 47	'Twilight blues / Mamula moon'
Hilo Bay	- Flower lei - Hawaiian souvenirs -	FB 3310 Dec 47	'Lovely hula hands / Hawaii sang me to sleep'
	King	FB 3312 Jly 47	'Drifting and dreaming / Come back to
	- Kamehameha - My tane - In		
	Waikiki'	Sorrento'	
FB 3029 Jly 44	'Romantic waltzes No.3 : I love you	FB 3322 Aug 47	Moonlight and shadows / Sweet
truly - That	naughty waltz - Just for a while -	Leilani	(both v. <i>Archie</i>
Mon bijou -	Dear love, my love - Dreamy	<i>Coates</i> )'	
melody'		FB 3337 Oct 47	'Moon over Maimi (v. <i>Archie Coates</i> ) / Blue
FB 3041 Sep 44	'Hawaiian memories No.5 : Song of	Hawaii'	
the islands -	Love song of Tahiti - Aloa oe -	FB 3369 Feb 48	'Samoan farewell song (v. <i>Louisa Reyes</i> ) / Now
Hawaii sing to	me - Flowered isles - Trade		is the hour (v. <i>G Barclay &amp; Paradise</i>
winds'		<i>Island Trio</i> )'	
FB 3059 Nov 44	'Serenade to a pagan moon / Blue	FB 3379 Mar 48	'Rhythm of the islands (v. <i>Paradise</i>
Bahamas'		<i>Island Trio</i> )	/ Toni-toni (v.
FB 3073 Jan 45	'Estrellita (Little star) / Tabu'	<i>Pulu Moe</i> )'	
FB 3090 Mar 45	'Hawaiian war chant / My little grass	FB 3380 May 48	'The one rose / On treasure island (both v. <i>Roy</i>
shack in	Kealakekua (both v.	<i>Edwards</i> )'	
<i>Kealoha Life</i> )'			
FB 3105 Apl 45	'Caprice Viennois / Intermezzo'		

FB 3406 Jly 48 'Tiger shark / Moonlight in Waikiki  
(v. Archie Coates & Paradise  
Island Trio)  
FB 3418 Sep 48 'Hawaiian hospitality (v. Archie  
Coates) /  
King's serenade  
(v. A C & Paradise  
Island Trio)  
FB 3431 Nov 48 'The white blossoms of Tahni (v. Rosa  
Macari)  
/ Sweet  
gardenia lei'  
FB 3448 Jan 49 'By the sleepy lagoon / Whisper that  
you love  
me (v. Rosa  
Macari)  
FB 3456 Feb 49 'The swan / Nocturne No.2 (Chopin)  
FB 3479 May 49 'Sophisticated hula (v. Paradise Island  
Trio) /  
Sweet Hawaiian kisses (v.  
Rosa Macari)  
FB 3491 Jun 49 'Let me whisper I love you / The blue  
lagoon  
(both v. George  
Barclay)  
FB 3512 Aug 49 'E-Liliu-D hula (v. Tau Moe Trio) /  
South Sea Sadie  
(v. Lani Moe)  
DB 2614 Dec 49 'A rose in a garden of weeds / Waltz  
melody'  
DB 2645 Feb 50 'Romantic waltzes No.6 (two sides)  
DB 2667 Apr 50 'Moonlight over Tahiti / O sole mio'  
DB 2717 Aug 50 'Irish waltz medley (two sides)  
DB 2757 Nov 50 'Scotlandia medley (two sides)  
DB 2822 Mar 51 'La vie en rose / La golondrina'  
DB 2890 Jly 51 'Ivor Novello waltz medley /  
Horatio Nicholls  
waltz medley'  
DB 2930 Oct 51 'Hear my song Violetta / Ay ay ay'  
MC 3423 Aug 53 'Tabu / Little star' (featuring  
Harry Brooker  
on electric  
Hawaiian guitar)

## Tony MERCER

Along with Dai Francis and John Boulter, Tony, with his strong deep voice, was one of the principle singers on the long running BBC TV series 'The Black and White Minstrels'. Born in South Yorkshire on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1922, he had hoped to follow in his father's footsteps (literally!) to become a professional footballer (Mercer senior played for Sheffield United). Tony did join Aston Villa, but a playing injury killed off any chance of the big time, so he turned to his other love, singing.

Tony began singing seriously at Mexborough grammar school, where he also learned to play accordion in the school band. This was a band that included among its numbers such famous (to be) names as Alan Moorehouse, Wally Stott and Bernie Fenton.

After leaving school Tony toured in revue singing and playing trumpet, and it was here he met his wife Jennifer, a dancer. Just before the war he won the All Britain Crooning Championship in Blackpool and sang with the bands of Bram Martin, Charlie Farrell and Oscar Rabin.

After wartime service in the Far East Tony spent three years in the ex-service personnel show 'Hello from S.E.A.C', that comprised artists who had seen service in the South East Asia Command. They appeared in my home town of Weston-super-Mare at the Knightstone Theatre

during June 1948. By 1950 Tony was part of the Lew Stone band, staying a year, making several broadcasts. He then toured with Roy Fox, Eric Winstone and Billy Ternent and in 1953 was vocalist with the short lived Harry Bence Band alongside Harry's wife Elizabeth Batey.

Tony had also become one of the established singers in the various George Mitchell choirs. He sang on George's Glee Club broadcasts, was one of The Millionaires for 'Star Bill' with Tony Hancock and one of the Merrymakers for 'Happy Holliday'.

It was as one of the George Mitchell Minstrels on television's 'Black and White Minstrel Show' from 1957 that Tony's talents were fully recognised and he soon moved out of the chorus into the solo spotlight. In 1960 the show went on tour including two summer seasons at Scarborough and two years later began a seven year record breaking run at London's Victoria Palace theatre. Unfortunately ill health continually dogged him and he eventually had to give up touring.

Tony died in 1973 aged only 51, a great loss to the Minstrel's show that went on until 1978 and an even greater loss to show-business in general. I don't believe he made any single records, but his 1968 Music For Pleasure L.P 'The Wonderful World of Tony Mercer' reached sales of over 100,000, quite something for a low budget album.

## Billy MERRIN

William Herbert Merrin was born in February 1900, son of the landlord of The Red Cow, a public house in Nottingham. As a youngster he already indicated signs of his future talents, playing a banjo to entertain customers. Billy was also a very keen sportsman and played football and tennis to county schoolboy standard. After leaving school he began work as a clerk, but when the First World War came along he signed up in the Air Service and trained as a wireless operator. When the war ended he decided to make music his career, as he now also played piano and alto-sax and was beginning to write music. His first song, 'I'm feeling blue', was published in 1920.

By the mid-twenties Billy was touring the country playing in various dance bands and in 1931 was leading his own at Nottingham Palais. This band, known as The Commanders, broadcast regularly on the Midland Region ensuring him a wide and growing reputation. The band had a brief spell in London, playing at Covent Garden Opera House, before Billy decided he preferred working in the Midlands (he is even reported as turning down the offer of a residency at the prestigious Cafe de Paris) and returned to Nottingham Palais.

March 1932 saw the bands first issued recording (two previous attempts were rejected), 'There's a ring around the moon', out on Decca. Billy, during the thirties, also recorded for several other labels including Panachord, Edison Bell, Regal Zonophone, Sterno, Plaza and he made some small Crown discs for Woolworth Stores.

In 1933 The Commanders moved to Nottingham's rival ballroom, The Victoria. They then spent some time at British Lion film studios, working alongside Gracie Fields on a film that seems to never have been released. Then came

spells at various dance halls and from 1934 until 1939 he was musical director for Ramsgate Corporation, leading his band at St. Lawrence Hall during the summer seasons.

Several singers owe their start in the business to Billy and one especially, Penny Nicholls, who he discovered at Ramsgate in 1935 when she was just nine year old Jessie Nicholson. Other vocalists who began with his Commanders were Rita Williams, Marjorie Manners and Ken Crossley. By 1939 Billy had earned the accolade of the BBC dramatising his life story, with the part of him as a boy played by Richard Attenborough making his first broadcast.

On the outbreak of the second war Billy's band broke up, but in 1942 he reformed for a resident position at Derby's Plaza Ballroom. The band was also back on air and often played some of Billy's own compositions, for by now he was earning a reputation as quite a good songwriter. One of his numbers, 'Say a little prayer', was even recorded by American heavyweight boxing champion Jersey Joe Walcott. Another was 'Be sincere' that he wrote with Max Miller, who featured it regularly in his act. Billy often used the name Gerry Mason when songwriting.

In 1943 he opened an office in Denmark Street from where he ran a song plugging business often assisted by one of his 1930's vocalists, Rita Williams, but it wasn't a success and he lost money. Towards the end of the war Billy toured as a solo variety act playing piano and singing his own songs.

After the war he once again reformed his band, playing a mixture of touring and resident venues. By now his discovery of a decade ago, Penny Nicholls, was making a name for herself singing with the bands of Teddy Foster and Ivor Kirchin, but from Whit Monday 1947 she joined Billy's band, resident at Nottingham Sherwood Rooms.

During the summer of 1948 The Commanders, with Penny Nicholls, were entertaining holiday-makers at Herne Bay's Central Bandstand during the day, whilst playing for dancers at the town's King's Hall each evening. Proving to be so popular, they returned to the town the following two summers. During the winter months Billy played mainly one night stands from his base in Nottingham, where he had an office next door to Nottingham's Empire Theatre. Bill and Penny played some variety dates billed as Penny Serenade and this became the title of her late forties Midland Region radio series.

Realising what a successful little singer Penny Nicholls had become Billy eventually gave up bandleading after his 1950 summer season at Herne Bay to become her musical director, accompanying her variety act either on piano or conducting the pit orchestra. Together they spent about nine very successful years touring the halls, plus summer seasons and pantomime. With variety on the wane by 1960, there came a parting of the ways when Bill took on the role of musical director for various touring shows. That December he wrote the music and conducted the orchestra for 'Babes in the Wood' at Glasgow Pavilion, while Penny was playing the title role in 'Aladdin' at Belfast Opera House.

In 1962 the two were re-united when Bill became MD on a touring production of 'The Black and White Minstrel Show' in which Penny was

appearing. The show, scheduled to tour Australia and New Zealand for a few months, was kept out there by popular demand for an amazing two and a half years.

Sadly during its run Billy's wife Elsie died suddenly, an event he never really overcame. Back in Britain he was MD for Harry Worth's 1965 'Here's Harry' summer season at Scarborough, but his heart wasn't in it and when the season ended he put away his baton for good. He retired to a small flat in Brighton and refused to have anything more to do with show-business, preferring to spend his time reading cowboy books (a lifelong passion) and taking the sea air. He had always been a round jolly man, but now became withdrawn and quite a fitness fanatic losing several stone. It must have done him good because he lived to be eighty. Billy died on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1980.

Although Billy Merrin made many records before the second war I'm not aware of any subsequent issues.

## **MIKI and GRIFF**

Popular exponents of a folk - country & western style of singing, husband and wife duo Miki and Griff owe their success, in no small way, to being 'discovered' by Lonnie Donegan. Griff Griffiths from Llandudno, North Wales met his wife Miki Salisbury, from Rothesay, Scotland, when they were both members of the George Mitchell Singers. During a long spell with the choir they gained extensive vocal experience, with much broadcast and stage work.

Deciding to go it alone, they toured their blend of song and humour at home and abroad for three years without making any great impact. During this time they sent a private recording to Ray Martin at Columbia and he, liking what he heard, gave them a chance on disc in July 1954, with a cover of the Four Lads U.S. comedy number 'Oh that'll be joyful'. But there was no follow up.

Later, when on a bill with Lonnie Donegan, who was very much a country & western man himself, he took a more than passing interest in their act booking them for a forthcoming tour of his. With Lonnie promoting them on stage the public began to take notice. Soon Miki and Griff were backing Lonnie on some of his Pye recordings and were getting nationwide exposure on his TV series 'Putting on the Donegan'.

Throughout most of the latter years of the fifties the duo toured with Lonnie, including two weeks at London's Palace Theatre during March 1959. This was also the year of their first big summer season, at Great Yarmouth Aquarium, again with Lonnie plus Lorrae Desmond and Des O'Connor. In April 1959, while working on one of Lonnie's recording sessions, the duo were encouraged to make their own solo disc 'Hold back tomorrow', with the Donegan Skiffle group backing them for a change. It managed two weeks in the lower regions of N.M.E's Top Thirty. Further singles and L.P's followed, with their best selling disc probably being 'Little bitty tear'.

Taking full advantage of the exposure that being a part of the Lonnie Donegan Show had brought them, Miki and Griff went on to tour with much success, including visits to Australia and

America.

Miki and Griff Recordings  
COLUMBIA

DB 3497 Jly 54 'Oh that'll be joyful / Lies'

PYE NIXA

N 15213 Jly 59 'Hold back tomorrow /  
Deedle-dum-

doo-die-day'

N 15266 May 60 'Long time to forget /  
Someday you'll

call me baby'

N 15296 Sep 60 'Rockin' alone (in an old rocking  
chair) / I'm

here to get my baby out of jail'

(acc by

Lonnie

Donegan group)

N 15346 Mar 61 'Have I stayed away too long /  
You don't ever

write or call'

N 15362 Jun 61 'I wish it had been a dream / My  
baby's gone'

N 15386 Oct 61 'Tennessee waltz / Whispering hope'

N 15412 Jan 62 'Little bitty tear / I missed me'

N 15432 Apr 62 'The tears break out on me /  
I wonder where you

are tonight'

N 15449 Jun 62 'This time I would know / It's just the  
idea'

N 15490 Dec 62 'Are you wasting my time / Mad, mad  
world'

N 15507 Mar 63 'Time changes everything / It's my  
way'

N 15534 Jun 63 '(There'll) Never be anyone else but  
you /

I'm the one who

loves you'

N 15555 Aug 63 'My heart will make a fool of me again  
/ I want

to stay here' (acc by Tony

Hatch orch)

N 15580 Jan 64 'It comes and goes / You can feel it in  
the air'

N 15689 Sep 64 'Automation / Oh so many years'

N 15831 Apr 65 'I crossed my heart / It hurt me more'

N 17017 65 'Last thing on my mind /  
Just for old

times sake'

N 17189 66 'We must have been out of our minds /  
Crystal

chandeliers'

MAJOR MINOR

MM 612 69 'I need your hand in mine /  
Everybody knows'

MM 677 70 'Two little orphans / Oh how I miss  
you'

MM 714 70 'Wedding bells / A little love'

PYE

N 45182 70 'Crying time / I didn't know'

N 45286 Oct 73 All I have to do is dream / Abide with  
me'

N 45438 Feb 75 'The world needs a melody /  
Before this day is  
done'

N 45523 Oct 75 'Bowling green / Lean on me'

N 45547 Nov 75 'When I grow too old to dream /  
Have I stayed

away'

N 46123 Nov 78 'Bowling green / Lean on me'

## Betty MILLER

Betty, described as vivacious, with class and

personality, was a singer with a strong leaning towards jazz and blues. She first came to public notice in the early fifties when she toured with the Sid Phillips band, during which time she made several recordings with them.

She later toured in the revue 'Something to Shout About', appeared in cabaret and on 13<sup>th</sup> June made her television debut on 'Showcase'. Along the way she married drummer Martin Aston and often appeared in variety with his backing group. In 1955 Betty made her solo recording debut on the new Pye label and later in the fifties appeared on Top Rank. With the late fifties increasing rock and roll influence, Betty, with her rhythm style, was much in demand for variety package shows and spent a lot of time touring, often in packages headed by Art Baxter and his Rocking Sinners.

As light relief she frequently returned to West End club work, notably at the Embassy Club. Betty, like her namesake Suzi, was very popular on the Continent and made regular tours often lasting many months at a time.

What happened to her earlier marriage I'm not aware, but I believe that during the mid-sixties on a tour of Germany she met and later married a Major in the US Army and returned with him to the United States. A recent report suggests that she passed away in California some time ago.

Betty Miller Recordings

H.M.V. (with Sid Phillips Band)

BD 6153 Dec 53 'You've got to see mama ev'ry night /  
Stop

ringing my bell'

BD 6165 Apr 54 'Basin Street blues'

BD 6168 May 54 'Disillusioned'

BD 6173 Jun 54 'Make love to me / Lies'

BD 6177 Sep 54 'A penny for a song'

BD 6182 Dec 54 'Forty cups of coffee'

PYE NIXA (acc by Tony Osborne orch)

N 15008 Oct 55 'Georgia's got a moon / Next train out  
of town'

N 15047 Apr 56 'Who are we / A sunny day'

TOP RANK

JAR 115 Apr 59 'Pearly gates / Old time religion'

JAR 127 Jun 59 'Jack O Diamonds / One kiss'

## Bob MILLER

Bob led one of the few big bands, The Millermen, still to be touring during the 1960's and beyond. Born in January 1923 at Belvedere, Kent, he no doubt inherited his interest in music from his mother, a pianist for silent films. A saxophone player himself, he was an engineering draughtsman at Vickers Armstrong while leading The Modernists, a semi-pro band, around South London back in the late forties. They were area winners in a 1951 Melody Maker dance band contest.

This success persuaded Bob to go full time professional and he joined Stan Atkins' Band at the Welling Embassy Ballroom. From June 1953 Bob was fronting his own seven piece at Mecca's Leeds Locarno. Success there soon brought him promotion to resident leader at Streatham Locarno, where the Millermen remained for five

years. Filling the vocal spots were Susan Johns and Dougie Arthur (who also doubled on trumpet). It was during this period that rock and roll began to make its mark on popular music and instead of ignoring it and hoping it would go away, like many dance band leaders, Bob faced it head on. It was no doubt this decision that took him from being a local dance hall favourite to a nationwide name.

Taking the lead from Bill Haley's Comets, not only did his musicians have to learn the music but also the movements. Like the Comets they had to gyrate as they played, jumping about and lying on the floor. These visual antics didn't go un-noticed by TV producers and when in January 1959 the BBC replaced 'Six Five Special' (Bob and the boys had already made their TV debut on 6-5 back in May 1958) with 'Dig This', the Millermen were there digging it for all they were worth as the featured band. Their first Fontana disc early in 1959 was 'Dig this' written by Bob with Brian Fahey, although the band had previously made four sides for Columbia.

Over the years Bob became a firm favourite on radio. He had made his first broadcast from Streatham Locarno back in April 1956 and his orchestra had also featured at the Miss World contest in October that year. From July 1957 The Millermen backed Matt Monro on the radio series 'Band Wagon' and during 1959 did a 14 week lunch time Light Programme series 'The Pop Shop' with vocals from Barbara Jay and The Raindrops. Throughout the sixties they were resident band on the long running radio series 'Parade of the Pops'.

On television, 'Dig This' turned out to be something of a disappointment and after its thirteen week initial run was quietly forgotten. The Millermen, on the other hand, were reprieved and turned up in its replacement series, 'Drumbeat'. After completing 35 weeks with the show the band went on tour, kicking off 14<sup>th</sup> September 1959 on Hastings Pier. During 1960 they supported US singer Bobby Darin on his U.K. tour and June Christy and The Four Freshmen the following year. They went on to back many big name visiting artists.

The band recorded several albums and continued to be busy on summer seasons, dance hall work, cruise liners and private functions well into the eighties.

During June 1972 Bob Miller indulged his love of sailing by taking part in the Transatlantic Yacht Race giving a day by day radio commentary. He died in June 1993 aged 70.

Bob Miller and the Millermen Recordings

COLUMBIA (as Bob Miller Music)

DB 4017 Nov 57 'The scamp / The sack line'  
DB 4140 Jun 58 'Square bash / Muchacha'

FONTANA

H 181 Feb 59 'Dig this / The poacher'  
H 192 May 59 'Little dipper / The keel row'  
H 228 Nov 59 'In the mood / Joey's song'  
H 236 Jan 60 'The busker's tune / My guys come back'  
H 245 Mar 60 '77 Sunset Strip / Manhut'  
H 284 Nov 60 'Night theme / Last date'

PARLOPHONE

R 4779 61 'Trouble shooter / Hootin`'  
R 4854 61 'The Oliver Twist / That's it'

POLYDOR

BM 56005 65 65 'Dick Van Dyke theme / 625 Special'

EMBER

EMB 194 May 64 'Hullabaloo and custard / Peridot'

MERCURY

MF 947 65 'Carnaby Street parade /  
Uptown and  
Downtown'  
C.B.S.

202299 Oct 66 'Saturday jump / No goodbyes'

COLUMBIA

DB 7877 66 'Get Smart / Bony's blues  
DB 8269 Sep 67 'Sweet Charity / The flipper'

SPIRAL

DIT 3 72 'Doin` the Slosh / Sloshing around'

## Gary MILLER

A successful singer, fair haired Gary was also establishing himself as an all round radio presenter and could have been another Jack Jackson or Jimmy Young, if he hadn't tragically died at the young age of only 42.

Born Neville Williams at Blackpool, he first sang in the local church choir, but in those days he was more interested in football. In 1940 he was playing for Blackpool Football Club's reserve team, but any ambition in this direction was interrupted by World War Two when he joined the Royal Navy.

During his naval service, where he rose to rank of Lieutenant serving aboard destroyers, Gary (or Neville as he still was) was always a popular choice on mess concerts, because of his impressions and knowledge of show-business in general (his parents were entertainers and he had already won a singing contest at a Blackpool Winter Garden Music Festival and appeared on some concerts before joining up).

After demob he decided neither football nor singing was a suitable career to follow (he had already met his future wife - dancer Joy Dixon, a member of a service entertainment unit - and wanted a secure future) and so decided to teach languages, enrolling on a training course at London University. But he couldn't completely break with singing and before long was supplementing his student's grant, appearing evenings and weekends at various pubs and clubs.

Discovering how much people enjoyed his voice, he decided it might not be a bad idea to try a career in singing after all and sent a test recording to the BBC. The result was a broadcast on 'Beginners Please' and several more radio dates followed. But progress was slow, he took acting lessons and secured work on several touring revues and played summer shows - in



1951, still using the name Neville Williams, he was at Margate Hippodrome in 'Seaside Rhapsody'. He made at least one recording with Geraldo under that name.

The turning point came following an audition for Norman Newell at Columbia Records with his first release 'From the time you say goodbye' in July 1952. This was when he changed his name to Gary Miller. Later that year Newell took charge of the new Philips record label and Gary was one of his first signings. For about a year he presented Philips Records' Radio Luxembourg show and later featured on 'Hello Young Lovers' sponsored by Jay's Furniture.

Gary was in at the launch of another record label when Pye began issuing discs in 1955, with his few chart hits coming on that label. His first recording for Pye was 'The yellow rose of Texas' that reached No.13, but the next, coupling two theme songs 'The Ballad of Davy Crockett and 'Robin Hood' in January 1956 was probably Gary's most successful disc. In competition with Dick James (and others) on both, Gary made it to No.10 with 'Robin Hood'. Another contest with Dick James was fought over 'The Garden of Eden' in 1957, with Gary just coming out on top at No.14, but it was Frankie Vaughan who took it to number one.

After his records began to appear in 1953, Gary became one of the regular anchors on television's 'Kaleidoscope', a magazine style series. He began touring in variety, starting with a week at the West Bromwich Plaza in May. On radio, as well as his Luxembourg show, he joined Carole Carr and the Peter Yorke Orchestra on the BBC series 'Mister Music'. Later in the fifties he introduced his own D.J. show 'Gary Miller's Mixture' on the Light Programme and supported comedian Jimmy Wheeler on his BBC TV series.

Constantly on tour, Gary spent seven weeks during the winter months of 1957-58 entertaining troops in the Middle East, and later played his first summer season in his home town of Blackpool. He appeared on 'Southern Rhapsody', the opening show of the Southern ITV service, transmitted from the Cunard liner 'Carolina' in Southampton Water on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1958. Star of the show was Gracie Fields. Gary did a lot of commercial television from the Midlands and North regions and introduced 'Win a Mink' (how times change!) from Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August 1958. He compered a Shirley Bassey Special in September, was on a number of the Jewel and Warriss 'Startime' series and often filled one of the seats on the 'Juke Box Jury' panel.

For the winter of 1958 Worthing's Connaught Theatre dispensed with its traditional pantomime and instead offered a musical comedy 'The Pied Piper' written by David Croft with music by Cyril Ornadel. Further developing his talents Gary had a singing-acting role alongside Josephine Anne, Harold Berens, Max Bacon and Billy Russell in this seasonal fantasy that received very good reviews during its six week run.

Before the show closed Gary had further extended his development into all round entertainer by beginning a long run as presenter of BBC radio's Wednesday evening 'Nightride' shows and in April he was also introducing 'Housewives Choice'.

Now at the top of his career, Gary co-starred with Bruce Forsyth in Bernard Delfont's summer season 'Showtime' at Weymouth's Alexandra Gardens for four months from 17<sup>th</sup> June 1959. In December he joined Harry Secombe, Alfred Marks, Roy Castle, Stephanie Voss and Paddy O'Neil in the London Palladium's spectacular panto 'Humpty Dumpty' (again with words and music from David Croft and Cyril Ornadel).

Gary closed the year singing on the 13 week 'Ternent Time' radio series with Billy Ternent's Orchestra and began 1960 with his own ATV series 'Meet Gary Miller', on which he welcomed a different guest each week. After a summer season in 'It's The Tops' with Beryl Reid and Derek Roy at Margate Lido, Gary had the honour, in November, of appearing on the Royal Variety Performance at the Victoria Palace, a show dominated by Sammy Davis Junior.

The sixties found Gary as busy as ever, another Palladium pantomime 'Little King Cole' in 1962, plus top of bill appearances in variety and television, including a resident spot on 'Stars and Garters' and he continued to compere and introduce shows like 'Housewives Choice'. In 1964 he played in the Sheldon Harnick- Jerry Block musical 'She Loves Me' at the Lyric Theatre and sang on the H.M.V cast album.

On record his singles now relied more on 'standards' rather than the latest 'beat' sounds ('There goes that song again' was Honey Hit Parade "Record of the Week" for 9<sup>th</sup> December 1961) and he made several albums, 'Meet Mister Miller' his first and 'Gary on the Ball' with Kenny Ball's jazz band, that later turned up in full, uncredited, on a budget price Castle label Kenny Ball CD in 1992.

But sadly it all ended for Gary on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 1968 when he collapsed and died from a heart attack at his South London home, aged only 42, survived by his wife Joy and three sons.

#### Gary Miller Recordings

COLUMBIA (as Neville Williams with Peter Yorke

concert orch)

DB 2496 Jan 49 'Heaven in your smile'

PARLOPHONE (as Neville Williams with Geraldo's orch)

F 2363 Jun 49 'A strawberry moon'

COLUMBIA (acc by Ray Martin orch)

DB 3111 Jly 52 'From the time you say goodbye /  
The angels are lighting God's little  
candles'

DB 3124 Aug 52 'If someone had told me / Beware'

DB 3149 Sep 52 'My darling, my darling / Within your  
arms'

PHILIPS (acc by Wally Stott orch unless stated)

PB 102 Jan 53 'Congratulations / I shall return' (with  
the

Ilford Girls Choir acc by

Geraldo Orch)

PB 115 Mar 53 'Till I waltz again with you (with Rita  
Williams

Singers) / I'm walking

behind you'

PB 130 May 53 (with other artists) 'Songs from Peter

Pan'  
PB 181 Sep 53 'Honey darlin' / Butterflies' (with the Rita Williams Singers)  
PB 217 Jan 54 'In the mission of St. Augustine / From here to eternity'  
PB 232 Sep 54 'I understand just how you feel / Girl and boy'  
PB 278 May 54 'Wanted / I know how you feel'  
PB 335 Sep 54 'Hold my hand / The high and mighty' ``  
PYE (acc by Tony Osborne orch unless stated)  
N 15004 Sep 55 'The yellow rose of Texas / The man from Laramie' (acc by Dennis Wilson orch)  
N 15020 Jan 56 'The ballad of Davy Crockett / Robin Hood'  
N 15056 Jun 56 'Moby Dick / Puppy love'  
N 15070 Jan 57 'The garden of Eden / Since I met you baby'  
N 15094 Jly 57 'Love letters in the sand / Wonderful, wonderful'  
N 15106 Oct 57 'The moonraker's song / Year after year'  
N 15120 Jan 58 'The story of my life / Put a light in the window' (with Beryl Stott group acc by Kim Drake orch)  
N 15136 Apl 58 'Dancing with my shadow / Lollipop'  
N 15140 May 58 'On the street where you live / That's for me' (with the Beryl Stott chorus acc by Bill Shepherd orch)  
N 15151 Jun 58 'Ivanhoe of England / (with Marion Ryan) A couple of crazy kids'  
N 15164 Nov 58 'The first Christmas day / Nearest and dearest'  
N 15188 Mar 59 'The railroad song / Jezebel'  
N 15207 Jly 59 'Someone to come home to / Sing along'  
N 15239 Nov 59 'Hold me, thrill me, kiss me / Marina'  
N 15277 Jly 60 'Mission bell / Happy together'  
N 15338 Mar 61 'Goodnight sweetheart / Dream harbour'  
N 15368 Jly 61 'The story behind my tears / Some enchanted evening'  
N 15404 Nov 61 'There goes that song again / The night is young (and you're so beautiful)'  
N 15425 Mar 62 'If you were the only girl in the world / Dancing in the dark'  
N 15452 Jly 62 'Moonlight becomes you / If I had my way'  
N 15474 Oct 62 'Mr. Lonely / Sunday'  
N 15497 Jan 63 'I've heard that song before / You are beautiful'  
N 15592 Dec 63 'Maria Elena / Amor'  
N 15651 May 64 'The way you look tonight / Dear friend'  
N 15698 Oct 64 'Aqua Marina / Stingray'  
N 17388 Oct 67 'My world is blue / Grain of golden sand'

## Irene MILLER

Irene appears to have started her vocal career sometime in the late forties and in 1948 was singing with the Ken Mackintosh Band at Nottingham's Astoria Ballroom, using the name Diana Miller. In February 1949 she moved over to Joe Loss, changed her name to Irene, and began recording with his orchestra. She spent the summer alongside Joe's other vocalists Elizabeth Batey and Howard Jones at the Villa Marina on the Isle of Man.

Early in 1951 Irene left Loss to freelance, but by the end of the year had returned to Ken Mackintosh. Another year and she was filling in for Terry Devon (expecting a baby) with the Tito Burns Sextet, before joining Johnnie Gray and his Band of the Day. During 1954 she accompanied Johnnie on some variety appearances and a two month tour of US service camps in Germany.

In November 1954 she left Gray and joined Dennis Hale in the vocal department of the Jack Parnell Band. By 1957 Irene had tired of touring and was resident with Frank King and his Band at London's Jack of Clubs. After that I have not been able to trace any further movements by Irene.

The only recordings I am aware of are those with Joe Loss, but I think Irene was for a time a member of The Raindrops vocal group and may have recorded with them. One report says she died aged 77 during 2005.

### Irene Miller Recordings

	H.M.V.	(with Joe Loss Orch)
BD 6046 Jun 49	'The windmill song'	
BD 6047 Jly 49	(with Elizabeth Batey & Howard Jones)	'Behind the clouds'
BD 6051 Sep 49	'Candy kisses'	
B 10088 Jun 51	(soloist with Frank Cordell orch & chorus)	'Granada / Lovely is the evening'

## Suzi MILLER

In 1942 not having long left school Renee Lester, as she was then, was singing with the Harry Roy Band and made several recordings with them on the Regal-Zonophone label (who incorrectly named her Lister).

By the time she was nineteen Renee had married the director of a furniture company and given up show business. But about six years later, in 1953, she decided on a come-back and now as Renee Miller she sang with the orchestra's of Carroll Gibbons and Maurice Winnick. She played cabaret at the Stork Club and appeared in the revue 'Sing For Your Supper' at the tiny Irving Theatre in London's Leicester Square, where her big number was 'Dirge for a debutante'.

Late in 1953 Decca records began to take an interest and signed her up, suggesting she change her name to Suzi Miller. Her first release coupled two light weight songs, "My heart belongs to only you", recorded on Capitol by June Christy, with the much older "Kiss me again". It didn't exactly set the world alight.

Jolly, bouncy numbers (often backed by The

Johnston Brothers) seemed to be her most popular style, and one of them, 'Happy days and lonely nights' in November 1954, became her biggest hit and only chart entry, although even then the Ruby Murray and Frankie Vaughan versions topped hers.

Cabaret work at clubs and support billing in variety, plus radio shows like 'Variety Playhouse' and 'Workers Playtime' kept her fairly busy, but she never felt she was getting anywhere in this country and increasingly sought and secured work on the Continent. During the mid 1950's she was probably just as popular in Germany as in her own country, even appearing in films there and recording solely for the German market.

Suzi, a shapely brunette and always a good visual attraction made an attempt to increase the British fans awareness by changing her agent early in 1957. The Bernard Delfont Organisation put her into a touring pop-skiffle package '(S)Cool For Cats' that also included pianist Dolores Ventura and the City Ramblers Skiffle Group.

Obviously her ambitions were not fulfilled, because she left the show before the end of its run to take on another Continental tour. This included a season at the Cafe Staadt in Munich. She later returned to the U.K. for a cabaret season at London's Colony Restaurant.

There were several TV appearances on popular music shows like the BBC's 'Off the Record' presented by Jack Payne and ITV's 'Music Shop' and in May 1957 she was at the Royal Albert Hall in the BBC 'Festival of Dance Music' with Marion Ryan and Lita Roza.

Suzi continued with variety and cabaret bookings at home whenever anything suitable came along. One of her rare summer seasons came in 1961 at Blackpool Winter Gardens with Lonnie Donegan, The Dallas Boys, comedian Norman Vaughan and singing husband and wife duo Miki & Griff. But be it either from choice or necessity, she still seemed to spend more time the other side of the English Channel. Maybe they appreciated her more over there.

Suzi was still around, bright and bouncy as ever, in the late nineties.

Suzi Miller Recordings

REGAL ZONOPHONE (as Renee Lister with  
Harry  
Roy's Band)

MR 3601 Jan 42 'You bring the boogie woogie out  
in me'  
MR 3614 Feb 42 'Chattanooga choo-choo'  
MR 3627 Apl 42 (with Marjorie Kingsley)  
'Kindergarten conga'  
MR 3634 May 42 'Deep in the heart of Texas'  
MR 3635 May 42 'Tica-ti tica-ta'  
MR 3652 Aug 42 (with H.Roy & M.Kingsley) 'Hold  
your hats on'  
MR 3653 Aug 42 " " " 'You are  
my

sunshine'  
DECCA (as Suzi Miller)

F 10205 Nov 53 'Kiss me again / My heart belongs to  
only you'

(acc by Johnny

Douglas orch)

F 10264 Feb 54 'The Tennessee wig walk / Bimbo'  
(with the

Johnston Bros. acc by Ivor

Mairants group)

F 10275 Mar 54 'From the vine came the grape / Lies'  
F 10328 Jun 54 'Canoodlin' rag / Huckleberry pie'  
(with the

Johnston Bros.)

F 10389 Oct 54 'Happy days and lonely nights / Tell  
me,

tell me' (with the Johnston

Brothers

acc by Johnny

Douglas orch)

F 10423 Dec 54 'Two step side step (with The Johnston  
Bros.) /

I'll hang my hat on a

Christmas tree

(with The

Keynotes)

F 10475 Feb 55 'Tweedle-de (with Johnston Bros.) /  
That's all I want

from you'

F 10512 Apl 55 'Dance with me Henry (with Johnston  
Bros.) /

Butterfingers'

F 10593 Aug 55 'The banjo's back in town / Go on by'

F 10677 Jan 56 'Ay-ay-senores / Reckless'

F 10722 Apl 56 'The key to my heart /

Get up, get up you

sleepy head'

F 10848 Feb 57 'I love my baby / The money tree'

## George MITCHELL

George was from a family where both his parents and grandparents sang in choirs, so it's not too surprising that he ended up leading one. Born at Falkirk, Scotland on 27th February 1917, his family came south and after leaving school he trained as an accountant beginning work with a London firm.

It was his financial background that led to George being drafted into the Royal Army Pay Corps during WW II where he held the rank of sergeant. During his service he formed a camp choir that in effect became the basis of his peacetime unit. Consisting of 16 members, the 33rd Battalion Royal Pay Corps Swing Choir quickly established a name for itself and appeared on several ENSA shows. On 13th February 1945 they were on radio's 'Variety Bandbox' and went on to make several further broadcasts. George's great skill was in arranging and conducting, rather than singing himself.

After demob George returned to a civvy job with Surbiton Borough Council but, after several requests to recreate his choir, gave up the office job in 1947 to work on some arrangements for the B.B.C radio series 'Cabin In The Cotton'. Soon he was leading his own professional singing outfit, with several of the original service members coming back on board. An early public appearance was at the Saville Theatre on 18th May 1947 in an R.A.F Band Show. On this occasion the choir consisted of twenty mixed voices, but it wasn't long before George had over a hundred singers on his books. For there wasn't just one choir, it was a case of horses-for-courses and George was able to supply a vocal ensemble to suit most needs.

The BBC made great use of his services, his regular choir was on the 1948 series 'Songs From the Years', while his Kerbside Choristers were

heard on the last series of Tommy Handley's 'I.T.M.A' from September 1948, and his Hi Gangsters featured on the last series of 'Hi Gang' in 1949.

The George Mitchell Glee Club, in one guise or another, had made over 1,000 broadcasts by the early fifties and appeared on the Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium on 13th November 1950, something they repeated at the Victoria Palace the following year, and once again back at the Palladium in 1957.

A never-ending schedule of radio and stage work kept George and his singers very busy. As well as those previously mentioned there were The Mitchell Men, The Mitchell Maids The Millionaires and of the course The George Mitchell Minstrels, without which there would have been no 'Black and White Minstrel Show'. The show, that began on television in June 1958 and ran for 22 years, became the huge success that it was due in no small part to the first rate arrangements and skilled coaching of the Mitchell Minstrels by George. On every show all you usually saw of him was a back view as he conducted his choir. The Black and White Minstrel Show was to, more or less, take over George's life with the television series being complimented by a long stage run at London's Victoria Palace, followed by extensive tours of Australia and New Zealand.

George, who married twice and had two children, died on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2002, aged 85.

George Mitchell Choir (Glee Club) Recordings

DECCA

F 9005 Nov 48 (with Anne Shelton) 'Abide with me /  
Away  
in a manger'  
F 9014 Nov 48 'The song is ended / Whispering'  
F 9121 Apl 49 (as The Unitones) 'It's a big, wide,  
wonderful  
world / St.  
Bernard waltz'  
F 9155 Jun 49 (as The Unitones) 'While we're young  
/  
The  
birthday waltz'  
F 9169 Jly 49 (with Gracie Fields) 'The last mile  
home'  
F 9178 Jly 49 'The Mexican hat dance / Sabre  
dance'  
(acc by Harold Smart organ  
& rhythm)  
F 9191 Aug 49 'We'll keep a welcome / My  
Kathleen'  
(acc by Don Lorusso organ  
& rhythm)  
F 9194 Aug 49 (with Gracie Fields)  
'Church bells on  
Sunday morning'  
F 9216 Sep 49 'Lay my head beneath a rose / Will  
the angels  
play their harps for me' (acc  
by DL o&r)  
F 9231 Oct 49 (with Anne Shelton) 'Twilight'  
F 9263 Nov 49 (with Stanley Black L A Rhythm)  
'Rumba  
rhapsody / Flamingo'  
F 9276 Nov 49 (as The Unitones) 'The toy piano polka  
/  
The Merry  
Christmas polka'  
F 9325 Feb 50 (with Vera Lynn)  
'Through a long and

sleepless night'  
F 9395 May 50 'The old master painter /  
Mademoiselle  
Hortensia' (acc by Harold  
Smart o&r)  
F 9442 Jun 50 (with Vera Lynn) 'On the outgoing tide'  
F 9587 Jan 51 'On the wings of the morning /  
God be  
with you'  
F 9655 Apl 51 'Love is such a cheat / The village  
fair'  
F 9672 May 51 'I leave my heart in an English  
garden /  
May the good Lord bless  
and keep you'  
F 9699 Jly 51 (with Robert Farnon Orch) 'Great  
day /  
Hallelujah'  
H.M.V.  
B 10596 Oct 53 (with Anne Shelton) 'Answer me'  
B 10641 Feb 54 " 'Why does it have to  
be me  
/  
The book'  
POP 1095 62 'The Virgin Mary had a baby boy /  
Where have all the  
flowers gone'

## Malcolm MITCHELL

Like many young lads of his day Malcolm's first musical instrument was a mouth organ. For most children it ended there but Malcolm, having mastered the harmonica, also conquered ukulele (he won talent contests as a cut down George Formby) and guitar before he left school.

A Londoner, born on 9th November 1928, his first job was as a trainee in an accountants' office, but at the age of 17, with the confidence of youth and an ever improving guitar technique (he took lessons from Ivor Maraints), Malcolm gave up the security of a steady professional career to go on tour with Felix Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders.

Rather chancy one might have thought, and so it was, but his playing ability soon placed him up among this country's top guitar players. With offers of work coming from all directions he left Mendelssohn to freelance, recording and broadcasting with The Squadronaires, Jack Simpson's Sextet, Stephane Grappelly and others.

In May 1947 Malcolm was a member of The Caribbean Trio, with Dick Katz and Coleridge Goode, appearing at the Hollywood Club, Marble Arch. A year on he was a member of pianist Ralph Sharon's Trio and later joined the Ted Heath Orchestra.

When Duke Ellington came to the London Palladium and needed a small group to accompany him, he chose Malcolm on guitar along with Tony Crombie drums and Jack Fallon bass. This trio also supported Ellington on his European tour.

Back in Britain he had a short spell playing in a Nat Temple Octet, but by October 1948 had formed his own Trio. Comprising Johnny Pearson piano, Teddy Broughton bass with himself on guitar, an early booking was for a newly opened night club in Nice, but when they got there they found that the job didn't exist.

Stranded with not enough money to get home

again they managed to earn the odd franc here and there and after a while got a broadcast date on Radio Monte Carlo. This led to an invite to play at the Prince of Monaco's new villa and consequently bookings at the luxurious Bar du Sofell on the seafront at Monte Carlo, opening there on Christmas Eve, and at Monaco's International Sporting Club. While in Monte Carlo the trio featured in the French film 'All Roads Lead To Rome', in which Malcolm plays violin. They pre-recorded twenty shows for broadcasting over Monte Carlo radio, before moving on to another booking at the Grand National Hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland.

It was August 1949 when Malcolm and his trio finally came home, straight into a six week engagement at Ciro's Club. While in Switzerland Malcolm had purchased one of the new Solovox mini-organs (made by Hammond in the States) and this had become an important part of the act, played by pianist Johnny Pearson. Arriving back in Britain the instrument was confiscated by the customs under Board of Trade rules because it was American and import would drain our dollar reserves. The fact that it had been bought in Switzerland with local currency earned in that country made no difference to Board of Trade officials.

On Saturday 17th September 1949 the trio were on television in the variety show 'Magic Carpet' and a week later joined Ted Heath on one of his London Palladium Sunday Swing Sessions. On 8th October they broadcast in 'Jazz Club' and on the 19th Ted Heath's late night 'Downbeat' show.

The same month they cut their first sides for Parlophone. Gramophone magazine likened their disc to "Whispering Jack Smith singing a trio with himself". Over the following four years the Trio made a further 14 discs for Parlophone, most of them best described as novelty numbers, but none the worse for that and enjoyable if not memorable.

Some touring including two weeks at the popular West End Restaurant in Edinburgh filled the remainder of the year. In December they were being featured between the acts of the Jack Buchanan play 'Castles in the Air' at the Adelphi Theatre and from February 1950 were also appearing late into the night at the West End's Garter Club. Radio included regular broadcasts on 'Break For Music', 'Rhythm Rendezvous' and 'Mid Day With Daisy May' that featured ventriloquist Saveen.

Following some very popular appearances on 'Variety Bandbox' the trio were given their own eight week series 'May We Come In' from 27th July 1950 and for the first time used a singer, Jill Page (Day). The group were still busy with theatre and club work (now at Les Ambassadeurs), but life became a little easier when 'Castles in the Air' went on tour in September without them (it had already moved to the Savoy Theatre), they had been in over 300 performances.

And the story might have ended just about there, at the Ambassadeurs Club on the evening of Thursday 12th October 1950. Using a new amplifier on his guitar Malcolm touched the microphone while holding the instrument and received a severe electric shock causing burns to

his face and hands. He collapsed to the floor unconscious, but bass player Teddy Broughton, with the aid of some dancers, managed to separate him from the mike and he was rushed to Charing Cross Hospital. Luckily he survived and after a few days' rest was back at work.

Following further 'Variety Bandbox', 'Music Hall' and 'Workers' Playtime' broadcasts the Trio joined Eric Barker's series 'Just Fancy' in January 1951. They were now appearing nightly at both The Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane and The Carousel Club, Piccadilly.

Although appreciated by most diners, Malcolm couldn't please everyone and on one night (Tuesday 6th March 1951) his namesake Sir Malcolm Sargent, who was dining with friends at the Dorchester, expressed a dislike of the electric guitar and requested the management silence the Trio, which they did and only the pianist was allowed to play for the rest of the evening.

During the year Malcolm and the Trio made their first provincial tour and from October replaced the Harry Parry Sextet at London's Washington Hotel, adding drummer Ray Kays for the booking. There was also romance in the air for both Teddy Broughton and Malcolm got married that year. Teddy wed Mabs Anderson on 30th June and Malcolm tied the knot with fashion model Edna Cherry at Willesden Synagogue on Sunday 16th December. The reception for a 100 was at the Dorchester where they had met a year before.

For all of 1952 the trio toured in a variety package with Eddie Calvert, promoted by Ambrose. After visiting almost every theatre in the country the show finally arrived on the London circuit in December.

They were back in town playing two weeks at the London Palladium in May 1953 on a bill headed by Eddie Fisher. It was another year of almost constant touring, during which Malcolm also supplied some of the background music for the film 'Star of my Night', a rather gloomy melodrama about an artist and his model. This included a tune called 'Space ship boogie'.

Although popular, the Trio were never likely to be top of the bill and for some time Malcolm, with his continuing self confidence (some called it conceit), had been keen to take the plunge as a solo vocalist. Early in 1954 he informed his colleagues of his decision to break up the Trio at the end of the year. As it turned out pianist Johnny Pearson jumped before he was pushed and left in July. Because of this Malcolm brought forward his plans and made his solo debut on a Sunday concert at the Wellington Pier Pavilion, Great Yarmouth on 25th July. Bassist Teddy Broughton went on to form a new trio, The Londonaires, with Ron Martin on guitar and piano and Terry Brown accordion.

Decca issued Malcolm's first solo vocal disc 'Gipsy love' in September and he went out on tour in variety. I've not heard the record and can't comment, but it appears the general opinion was not favourable and within a few months he conceded he was a better musician than he was singer. Malcolm knew the only way back was with something bigger and better than the famous trio. He decided it had to be a big band, put the idea to agent Harold Davison who agreed to take him on, and so Malcolm

mortgaged his house to provide the immediate cash and began recruiting musicians. His last solo appearances were possibly three programmes over Dutch radio from Hilversum, with The Metropole Orchestra and The Ramblers Dance Orchestra during the week commencing 15th January 1955.

The band's debut appearance was at Nottingham's Astoria Ballroom on Friday 25th February 1955. They arrived on stage in total darkness, the lights having been turned out as the resident Leslie Douglas Band finished their session. When the lights went on again the new Malcolm Mitchell Orchestra was on the bandstand and went straight into their opening number 'Debut' specially written for the event. Two onlookers to the event were Alma Cogan and Jack Jackson, who had dashed over from the Empire Theatre where they were appearing in variety. Vocalist with the orchestra was Carole Newton and Malcolm later added Dennis Morley who was discovered singing in pubs in the Old Kent Road.

More dance hall bookings and concerts followed and the band made its first London appearance at The Royal Albert Hall on Sunday 20th March, alongside the Ronnie Scott Band. First broadcast was a late night spot on the Light on the 10th June. No expense was spared on publicity for the new outfit and despite some initial mixed reaction, they appear to have been kept busy on mainly one night stands, a lot of them in Scotland.

For whatever reason, perhaps it was the finance of maintaining a big unit, the band folded in August 1956 and Malcolm returned to the variety stage with his new trio, although there were now four of them, Frank Bates on piano, Frank Richardson bass, Jackie Dougan drums with Malcolm as usual on guitar. They appeared on television in 'Hip Hip Who Ray' with Ted Ray and were regulars on 'Fancy Free'. On stage they worked on a bill with Derek Roy and Billie Anthony and in November were on the London circuit backing Jerry Colonna's jazz trombone solo's.

But now the strain of the past few years finally took their toll and Malcolm was admitted to West Middlesex Hospital with what were described as "chest problems". The new quartet was taken over by clarinetist Harry Conway who expanded it into a quintet by adding Dennis Roberts on trumpet.

Malcolm spent many weeks in hospital and even more convalescing. His first appearance after the illness as a solo guitar-vocalist came on ITV's 'Jack Jackson Show' on Sunday 7th April 1957. Solo variety work followed, including two weeks at the London Palladium in May, on a bill with Howard Keel.

June saw the formation of another trio, that had Frank Bates back on piano with Russ Stableford bass. They opened with a season at Quaglino's Restaurant that saw them through till December. Most of 1958 they toured in variety including a summer season at Southsea's Kings Theatre in a show starring Tommy Trinder and Anne Shelton.

They were resident group on the first series of radio's 'Beyond Our Ken' from July 1958 and from Monday 22nd December appeared three

times a week on Southern ITV's 13 week series 'Three's Company'. From July 1959 they had a similar commitment on 'Take It Easy' that also featured Jim Dale and Janie Marden. On 6th September they were on 'Sunday Night at the Prince of Wales' compered by Dickie Henderson.

In March 1960 Malcolm added a drummer and a vocalist (Sandra Gall) for a three month season at London's Jack of Clubs, but afterwards said it had totally worn him out. Now concentrating mostly on radio, television and the occasional variety, the trio was back on 'Sunday Night at the Prince of Wales' in June and on 3rd July 'The Malcolm Mitchell Show' began a 13 week run on Sunday afternoons on BBC TV. Produced by Richard Afton, as well as leading his trio, Malcolm compered, sang and indulged in a little comedy with various guests. During August the trio appeared for two weeks at the Earls Court Radio Show.

Another BBC television series in 1961 was 'Off the Cuff', while over on Southern ITV the group were regulars on 'Songs I Wish I Had Written'. During November Malcolm had a two week spell as presenter of radio's 'Housewives Choice' and the same month the trio were on The Royal Variety Performance supporting Nina & Frederick (they were appearing together in variety at the time).

Malcolm, while continuing to perform, began to take more interest in the commercial side of the business and joined forces with Bob Monkhouse, forming Mitchell-Monkhouse Associates Ltd., producing words and music for TV jingles, films and plays. He died at Bognor Regis in March 1998, aged 71.

#### Malcolm Mitchell Recordings

##### PARLOPHONE (Malcolm Mitchell Trio)

R 3256	Feb	50	'Man or mouse / Miss Annabelle Lee'
R 3305	Aug 50		'I cover the waterfront / The spider and the fly'
R 3333	Nov 50		'The curse of China / The yodelling ghost'
R 3371	Mar 51		'Your feet's too big / Minikins, minikins, mitzy moo'
R 3383	May	51	'Rose, Rose I love you / Easy come, easy go'
R 3410	Jly 51		'I'm barmy over you / Trinidad rumba'
R 3439	Oct 51		'Shanghai / Riley's daughter'
R 3468	Dec 51		'Honey lips / Castle rock'
R 3503	Mar 52		'Oh! she's gone, gone, gone / Slow and easy'
R 3553	Jly 52		'A little love (can go a long, long way) / Busybody'
R 3626	Jan 53		'The glow worm / The choo-buy song'
R 3711	Jly 53		'Let's walk that-a-way / Tattle-tale duck'
R 3783	Dec 53		'False hearted lover / Istanbul'
R 3830	Mar 54		'The Jones Boy / Granada'
R 3866	May	54	'Cleo and me-o / Catwalk'

##### DECCA

F 10378	Sep 54	(solo vocal)	'Gipsy love / Caring'
F 10465	Feb 55	(M M Orch)	'Debut / I can't believe that you're

love with me'  
F 10503 Apl 55 " 'Little brown jug mambo /  
Rites  
of swing' ORIOLE

CB 1572 Nov60 (*MM Trio*) 'The wanted men / The blues'

## Matt MONRO

A fine, easy-going, velvet voiced singer who, amid all the beat music of the early sixties, showed that a well sung ballad could still be hit parade material. To prove it, his 'Portrait of my love' almost made it to the top, reaching No.3 in January 1961.

Matt was born Terence Parsons in North London on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1932 and, as a youngster, he became a fan of the relaxed style of singers like Perry Como and Frank Sinatra and spent a lot of time imitating them in local amateur shows.

In 1950 Terry was doing his national service with the Tank Regiment in Dorset and his first success in the music business came when he won a talent contest in Weymouth. Posted with the R.E.M.E out to Hong Kong he continued to be a favourite on camp concerts and was even given his own show on service radio.

Demob brought him back to London and his ambitions down to earth. He took a job as a long distance lorry driver, but soon tired of the hours involved and opted for a shorter route, driving a number 27 London bus. This gave him more chance of taking singing work in local clubs and dance halls. He sang part-time with the Stan Davis Band and auditioned for Eric Winstone and Eric Delaney.

His first regular singing job was for six months in 1955, touring with Harry Leader's Band. Harry gave Terence the name Al Jordan and also his first recording session, singing 'Strange lady in town' for an American album release on the Solitaire label. When Leader's tour ended it was back to the buses and to singing weekends with Jimmy Kavanagh's Band at Hornsey Town Hall.

An approach to Decca Records was initially turned down, but pianist Winifred Atwell heard him and persuaded them to think again. She even helped choose the new name of Matt Monro - Monro being her father's Christian name. Decca's first session with Matt, on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1956, was for a 10 inch L.P 'Blue and Sentimental' (LF 1276) and they also issued three singles (there should have been a fourth coupling 'Gone with the wind' with either 'A cottage for sale' or 'My old flame', but either way it didn't make it). After that they lost interest and left it for the new Fontana label to take over almost a year later. All Matt's Decca recordings are available on a 1991 CD 'Matt 'n' Mel' that he shares with Mel Torme.

In the meantime Matt had done some broadcasts with Cyril Stapleton's Show Band and Bob Miller's Millermen and was appearing on stage with the Tommy Watt Band. Early in April 1958, if you were one of the lucky ones with a colour television set, you may have seen him on test colour television transmissions singing 'How long has this been going on'. In July he began a radio series 'Once In A While' with June Marlow. As 1959 progressed and with no further records,

Matt had almost totally faded from view and was willing to take anything that came along. That's when Peter Sellers came on the scene, looking for a Frank Sinatra sound-a-like for his latest Parlophone LP 'Songs For Swingin' Sellers'. Labelled as Fred Flange, Matt made a very creditable job of 'You keep me swingin'' causing quite a few people to question if it was really Sinatra himself.

George Martin, recording manager at Parlophone, wasn't fooled and soon had Matt's name on a recording contract. It was his second disc on Parlophone that finally hit the target. 'Portrait of my love', written by Cyril Ornadel and Norman Newell, entered the N.M.E chart at the end of December 1960 and within four weeks had reached its high point of No.3 position. Follow up record 'My kind of girl', from the pen of Leslie Bricusse, did almost as well reaching No.5 at the beginning of April. Both songs were Ivor Novello award winners. Other recordings to chart in 1961 were 'Why not now', 'Can this be love' and 'Gonna build a mountain'. 'My kind of girl' and 'Why not now' were both hit parade successes in America, as was his 1964 hit, 'Walk away'. 'Portrait of my love' also made the top ten in the States, but over there it was the Steve Lawrence version.

While waiting for his first chart hit, Matt hadn't been wasting his time. Early in the year he had been singing the praises of the soap that "makes you a little lovelier each day" on commercial television and made several other TV jingles. In March he joined Johnnie Gray's Band of the Day on their US tour and while there became the first pop singer to sing at The Pentagon, Washington. He had been invited by President Eisenhower's personal aircrew. This was followed by a working trip to Ireland and then a season at London's Astor Club.

After the success of his Parlophone sides, Philips issued some earlier test recordings as one side of an LP, with DJ Tony Blackburn on the other (surely the kiss of death!). Matt won a court action to prevent Jeff Kruger's Ember label from putting out a single of two more of his early tests. Decca also issued a re-hash of his earlier LP for them, re-titled 'Portrait' on their budget Ace of Clubs label. In June 1961 Matt made a flying visit to the States to promote his recordings, out over there on the Warwick label.

With two hit records under his belt, Matt set off as top of the bill on a tour of the remaining variety theatres around the country ("feeling scared stiff" he admitted). On radio he guested on 'Parade of the Pops', 'Easy Beat' and 'Saturday Club' and television included The Billy Cotton Show, 'Thank Your Lucky Stars' and 'Ask Anne' with Anne Shelton. On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1961 he began his own Light Programme series 'Matt's Kind of Music', on which he not only sang, but also introduced other acts. He had a regular show on AR-TV and in October began a 13 week series of 15 minute shows on Radio Luxembourg, with the Johnny Spence Orchestra.

During the summer months of 1961 Matt appeared every Sunday on Blackpool's North Pier with Bert Weedon, Lyn Cornell, The Gaunt Brothers and Paul Burnett's Orchestra in a stage show compered by Brian Matthew. On 24<sup>th</sup> September he made his first appearance on

'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' and in October he was back in America on the Ed Sullivan Show and "taking New York by storm" at the Round Table Club. Back home he did several weeks in cabaret, appeared on 'The Benny Hill Show' on 16<sup>th</sup> December and on Boxing Day was back in the US playing cabaret, with another Ed Sullivan Show appearance New Year's Eve.

This more or less sets the scene for the next two decades, Matt became the ultimate globetrotter never stopping anywhere long enough to put down roots. It could be Australia one week, Hollywood the next and Honk Kong the week after, with the occasional UK date squeezed in. Matt was voted top British male singer in 1963 and 1965. He sang the title song over the credits of the 1963 'Bond' movie 'From Russia With Love' and came second in the 1964 Eurovision Song Contest singing 'I love the little things'. For many years he lived in America where much of his night club bookings came from, and during this time recorded for Capitol. Not long before he died he was still big enough over there to top the bill at Las Vegas.

Matt had further chart successes with 'Softly as I leave you', 'When love comes along', 'My love and devotion', 'From Russia with love', 'Walk away', 'For mama', 'Without you', 'Yesterday' and 'And you smiled'.

Following a period of ill health, Matt died from cancer of the liver on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1985, aged only 54, a terrible loss of such a great talent.

Matt Monro Recordings

#### DECCA

F 10816 Nov 56 'Ev' rybody falls in love with somebody /

Out of sight,  
out of mind'

F 10845 Jan 57 'The garden of Eden / Love me do'

F 10870 Apl 57 'My house is your house (Mi casa su casa) /

The

bean song'

#### FONTANA

H 115 Feb 58 'I'll never have a sweetheart / The golden age'

H 122 Apl 58 'Another time another place /

The story

of Ireland'

H 167 Dec 58 'Prisoner of love / Have guitar will travel'

(acc by Ken Jones orch

& chorus)

#### EMBER

EMBS120 Feb 61 'The ghost of your past / Quite suddenly'

#### PARLOPHONE

R 4638 60 'Love walked in / I'll know her'

R 4714 60 'Portrait of my love /  
You're the top of my

hit parade'

R 4755 61 'My kind of girl / This time'

R 4775 61 'Can this be love / Why not now'

R 4819 61 'Gonna build a mountain / I'll dream of you'

R 4868 62 'Softly as I leave you /  
Is there

anything I can do'

R 4911 62 'When love comes along / Tahiti'

R 4954 62 'My love and devotion / By the way'

R 4995

R 5019

R 5068

now'

R 5103

63 'I've got love / One day'

63 'The girl I love / Leave me now'

63 'From Russia with love / Here and now'

64 'It's funny how you know /  
I love the

little things'

R 5150

R 5171

R 5215

R 5251

R 5307

R 5348

R 5397

64 'I love you too / Somewhere'

64 'Around the world / Walk away'

64 'Going places / For Mama'

65 'Start living / Without you'

65 'Before you go / And roses, and roses'

65 'Yesterday / Just yesterday'

66 'Beyond the hill / How do you do'

#### CAPITOL

CL 15436 Mar 66 'Born free / Other people'

CL 15448 Jun 66 'Honey on the vine / My best girl'

CL 15477 Nov 66 'When you became a man /

Wednesday's child'

CL 15496 Mar 67 'Where in the world / The lady smiles'

CL 15506 Jun 67 'What to do / These years'

CL 15518 Oct 67 'Release me / Pretty Polly'

CL 15541 Mar 68 'One day soon / Yours alone'

CL 15551 May 68 'The music played / All that remains'

CL 15573 Dec 68 'The impossible dream / Come back to me'

CL 15585 Mar 69 'That's the way it goes / All of a sudden'

CL 15597 May 69 'When I fall in love / Southern star'

CL 15603 Jly 69 'On a clear day / On days like these'

CL 15628 Feb 70 'Just a heartbreak ago / Pickin' up the pieces'

CL 15643 Jun 70 'We're gonna change the world /  
You're

closed to me'

CL 15647 Jly 70 'If there ever is a next time /  
You made me so

very happy'

CL 16126 Mar 80 'Born free / We're gonna change the world'

#### COLUMBIA

DB 8788 71 'Isn't it a pity / Mama packed a picnic tree'

DB 8860 72 'Wish now was then / This way Mary'

DB 8900 72 'Sarah's coming home / Only friends'

DB 8936 72 'Curiouser and curiouser /  
The me I

never knew'

DB 8988 73 'I am in life / I am'

#### E.M.I.

EMI2091 Nov 73 'And you smiled / There ya go'

EMI2186 Jly 74 'How could I ever leave you /  
Darling come

home soon'

EMI2273 Mar 75 'You and me against the world /  
So little time'

EMI2329 Jly 75 'All the wishing in the world /  
You're

sensational'

EMI2446 Jun 76 'Little things / By her side'

EMI2454 Apl 76 'Michelle / Yesterday'

EMI2609 Apl 77 'If I never sing another song /  
Mama packed a

picnic tea'

EMI5087 Jun 80 'The precious moments / May

each day'

EMI5194 Jun 81 'Diana / Beyond the hill'

#### COLUMBIA



DB 9060 Jan 79 'We`re gonna change the world /  
 If I never sing  
 another song'  
 DB 9097 Oct 84 'You bring out the best in me /  
 Don`t want to  
 run your life'

## MOORE Shelley

Shelley Moore, so one report said "was not the best singer in the world, but got ten out of ten for effort because she constantly rang newspapers publicising herself". A very attractive redhead she was in cabaret at London's Gargoyle Club when in November 1955 Columbia issued her first record 'In the wee small hours' that grabbed a few positive reviews but didn't set the world alight.

Also a songwriter, she wrote Ruby Murray's minor hit 'Please hold me tightly' and sang it herself on ITV's 'Music Shop' on Saturday 14 January 1956. Later that year she had a brief spell as vocalist with Eric Delaney's band, but little more seems to be known about her until 1958 when Esquire Records were promoting her as "The Voice with a Mink Touch" a sultry jazz singer on its 'Starlight' label. She claimed her influence came from listening to June Christie, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and the like. Backed by some very creditable musicians labelled as The Sessionaires they included Keith Bird on clarinet and tenor, Ike Isaacs guitar, Martin Slavin vibes and Coleridge Goode bass, Shelley recorded four numbers for which she had written both the words and music.

As often happens the British public were not interested in supporting their own and so Shelley set off to America where they welcomed her with open arms. Signed by Chess Productions she recorded an album 'For the First Time' on their Argo label, backed by such jazz greats as Ramsey Lewis, Eddie Harris, Plas Johnson and John Collins. Further LP's followed before Shelley got married and settled down to raise a family. But although she gave up touring she didn't stop singing and was always ready to delight audiences with a diverse selection of material, including many of her own compositions, around her home in Orange County USA.

Shelley, despite the fact she must now be in her seventies, is still performing, having recently recorded a couple of CD's and 'For the First Time' has also been reissued on CD by Verve.

Shelley Moore recordings

COLUMBIA

DB 3663 Oct 55 'In the wee small hours of the morning /  
 When you lose the one  
 you love'  
 (also on  
 SCM 5197)  
 DB 3774 Jun 56 'Stop teasin' me / Surprise'

STARLITE

ST 0002 Jan 58 'Gone on the guy / You've tied me up'  
 ST 0003 Feb 58 'Everything is gonna be alright /  
 Where is the  
 bluebird'  
 (all four above tracks also available on ST EP 1)

ST EP 7 Sep 58 with John Scott's Kool Kats 'Out of  
 nowhere /  
 Too marvellous for words / This  
 mood of mine  
 / Dancing on the  
 ceiling'

## Ivor MORETON & Dave KAYE

Both Londoners, they began separate professional careers as pianists around West End night clubs. After-hours jam sessions brought them together and to the notice of bandleader Harry Roy. As twin pianists of the R.K.Olians, the band that Harry assembled to support variety at London's Leicester Square Theatre in 1931, the pair soon came to public notice and their duets on the Roy band's regular Friday evening broadcasts brought in piles of fan mail.

Ivor Moreton also sang with Harry Roy's band, appearing as vocalist on many of their records. He can be seen in action, with Harry Roy and Bill Currie performing the vocal feature 'No words - nor anything', in the film 'Everything Is Rhythm', which is shown now and again on TV.

Aware of the duo's popular appeal Parlophone began issuing them on disc and by 1936 the duo had left Harry Roy to go it alone as a variety act around the halls. Serving with the R.A.F during WW II they stayed together working as entertainment officers, both with the rank of sergeant. After the war they returned to variety touring the world to much acclaim, especially in the sub-continent. A ten week tour of Australia in 1948, lasted over twenty months, with them even playing the ugly sisters in Melbourne Tivoli Theatre's 1949 pantomime 'Cinderella'.

By the mid-fifties with their style of music quickly going out of fashion, pushed aside by the encroaching rock sound, they packed it in and both transferred their energies into successful business careers, opening a restaurant in central London.

The synchronised piano style they achieved, although looking easy, required much practice and concentration, but rarely did they falter while gliding through one of their dance medleys, serious pieces or comedy numbers, many being their own compositions.

Most of the pair's Parlophone recordings were 'Tin Pan Alley Medleys' with six tunes on each disc, the final one being Medley No.99 in September 1953, although they made a few more discs with the last being a Christmas Music Box in December 1954.

Ivor Moreton died in December 1984 and his partner Dave Kaye in December 1996.

## The MUDLARKS

Two brothers and a sister from Bedford, and their name was Mudd. Fred, Jeff and Mary began singing in public as The Mudd Trio in 1951 when their ages were 17, 14 and 12 respectively. Performing mainly at family and friends parties, it came to an end when Fred was called up for his national service in the RAF. Most of this he spent in Malta where he teamed up with bass and trumpet players to form another trio. On his discharge the Mudd Trio reformed and spent several years playing concerts and local clubs.

In 1957 all three were workers at Vauxhall Motors in Luton and one night were appearing on a charity concert at the George Hotel there. Also present was radio and television personality David Jacobs, who thought they had promise and alerted his agent and Norrie Paramor at Columbia Records.

After that things happened fast. First they needed a new name and did consider becoming The Bellhops, but their mother suggested The Mudlarks and that was it. Their first record, 'Mutual admiration society', was out in January 1958 and received some favourable reviews. Just as it seemed things were going right for the Mudd family, Jeff received his call up papers, but he requested, and was given, a year's deferment.

The trio made their variety debut at Brighton Hippodrome on Monday 3rd March, and the same month came their second record, a cover of The Chordettes big hit 'Lollipop'. With The Chordettes version already there, The Mudlarks 'Lollipop' leapt into the NME chart just behind them at No.11 at the beginning of April and within two weeks were ahead, reaching their high spot at No.2 at the end of May.

They appeared on television's 'Six Five Special', Cyril Stapleton and Jack Jackson shows and were booked for a summer season at Weymouth Alexandra Gardens in 'Show Time' with Charlie Drake, Billy Burden and Karen Greer.

The Mudlarks next disc was another cover of a US hit, this time The Monotones 'Book of love', and once again it was a winner, spending two weeks at No.8 in July. But that was about it as far as hit parade success was concerned, they made many more good records, but their only other chart entry was 'The love game' that just squeezed into the Top Thirty almost a year later.

On Sunday 21st September 1958 they were on ITV's top variety show 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' and the very next day opened for a week at London's Prince of Wales Theatre. In November, still with less than a year's professional experience, the trio were honoured with an appearance on the Royal Variety Performance at the London Coliseum, in a brother and sister feature that included The Beverley Sisters and The King Brothers. Another accolade came with the Melody Maker 1958 readers' poll in which The Mudlarks came second to The Polka Dots in the vocal group section. The New Musical Express put them top in 1958 and 1959. They closed what had been quite a spectacular year appearing in the pantomime 'Aladdin' at Hulme Hippodrome with Larry Grayson, Billy Danvers and Joan Edwards. When on the road they had travelled from show to show in a gleaming white Vauxhall (what else) Cresta.

Back on the road after the panto season, they were on 'S.N at the L.P' again on 1st February and back at the Prince of Wales for two weeks from 6th April, but now there was a new face in the line up. Her Majesty's Government had finally caught up with Geoff Mudd and he began his National Service with The Royal Engineers on 5th March. Newcomer was 20 year old David Lane.

1959's summer season was spent in 'Showtime' at Blackpool's North Pier with

Edmund Hockridge, Charlie Drake and The Three Monarchs. In October they began a 13 week Radio Luxembourg series with The Jack Emblow Quartet. The same month Fred announced his engagement to BBC TV 'Blue Peter' presenter and former Miss Great Britain, Lelia Williams, and they were married a year later. Lelia joined them as compere on a tour of Granada Theatres, with Craig Douglas and Bert Weedon. Pantomime, also for Granada, was a touring version of 'Babes in the Wood' with Billy Burden and Tommy Rose, that took in Gloucester Regal and both Woolwich and Shrewsbury Granada Theatres.

More touring led up to another summer season with diminutive comic Charlie Drake, this time at Great Yarmouth's Pier Pavilion, with Albert & Les Ward and ventriloquist Terry Hall. Popular on television, they kept turning up on 'Six Five Special' and other pop shows like 'Cool For Cats' and 'Oh Boy', although by now their disc output was becoming somewhat mediocre.

In March 1961 Jeff was out of the Army and re-joined the group. David Lane went back to being a solo singer-compere around the club circuit, very much missed by at least one member of the remaining trio. David came back to marry Mary Mudd on 18th August 1962 at Newton Abbot.

A road accident in November 1961, in which Fred sustained a cracked shoulder and Jeff a broken jaw, put them out of action for most of the winter. After that they did some foreign service camp tours and a couple more summer seasons at home, but by the mid-sixties The Mudlarks, like many other fifties groups, had more or less faded from view.

One reader at least believes that Jeff Mudd was still active in the mid-nineties, organising Karoke evenings for holiday-makers at Looe in Cornwall.

#### The Mudlarks Recordings COLUMBIA

DB 4064	Jan 58	'Mutual admiration society / A new love'
DB 4099	Mar 58	'Lollipop / Young dove's calling'
DB 4133	May 58	'Book of love / Yea, yea' (acc by Ken Jones Jive Group)
DB 4190	Sep 58	'There's never been a night / Light'nin' never strikes twice'
DB 4210	Nov 58	'Which witch doctor / My grandfathers clock'
DB 4250	Jan 59	'Abdul the Bulbul Amer cha cha / The love game' (acc by Ken Jones band)
DB 4291	Apl 59	'Time flies / Tell him no'
DB 4331	Jun 59	'Waterloo / Mary'
DB 4374	Nov 59	'True love, true love / Tennessee'
DB 4417	Feb 60	'Never marry a fishmonger / Candy'
DB 4513	60	'(You've got to) Move two mountains / You're free to go'
DB 4636	61	'When Mexico gave up the rumba / Toy balloon'
DB 4708	61	'Don't gamble with love / The mountain's high'
DB 4788	62	'Coney Island washboard / (Them)
Twistin' bones'		
DB 4861	62	'March of the broken hearts /

Manana

pasado manana'  
DECCA

F 11537 Nov 62 'I've been everywhere /  
Just the snap of  
your fingers'

F 11601 Mar 63 'The little cracked bell of San Raquel /

La-de-da'  
FONTANA

H 495 64 'Here's another day / Walk around'

## Hal MUNRO

A name that frequently appeared on Woolworth's Embassy label around the end of the fifties, it is said to have really been the coloured singer Neville Taylor who with his group The Cutters were regulars on ITV's 'Oh Boy' shows.

Hal Munro Recordings

EMBASSY

WB 269 Jan 58 'Jailhouse rock / You send me'  
WB 278 Mar 58 'Good golly Miss Molly / Don't'  
WB 284 May 58 'Wear my ring around your neck /  
Breathless'  
WB 336 May 59 'C'mon everybody / It's late'  
WB 340 Jun 59 'Dream lover /  
Where were you (on our  
wedding day)'  
WB 380 Feb 60 'On a slow boat to China' (only on one  
side)  
WB 386 Mar 60 'You got what it takes / California  
here I come' (acc by Steve  
Stanard orch)  
WB 401 Jun 60 'The wreck of the John B / Good  
timin''  
WB 458 Jul 61 'You always hurt the one you love /  
Don't  
you know it'

## Ronnie MUNRO

During his lifetime Ronnie Munro made hundreds of recordings under his own name and many pseudonyms. Born in 1897, his first professional work was playing piano in London clubs. From an early age Ronnie took an interest in the theory side of music and in 1926 won a Melody Maker competition with his arrangement of the tune 'Carolina'. The same year with his dance orchestra he began, on the Parlophone label, a recording career that spanned five decades. Ronnie later became musical director at Parlophone and over the years worked as session director at H.M.V., Regal-Zonophone and Columbia. Not only did he arrange other peoples' music, but also wrote several popular songs of the day.

During the war years Ronnie worked at the BBC, based in Glasgow, where he created and led the Scottish Variety Orchestra which featured in the radio series 'Sunday Serenade'. When the war ended Ronnie took his band on the road and for the summer season of 1947 was at Butlin's Ayr holiday camp with vocalists Diana Whitburn and Kenny Kaye. So began an association with Butlin's that lasted many years and 1948 found him back at Ayr for another 4½

month season. The remainder of the year consisted of one-night-stands and short dance hall seasons including three weeks at Sunderland's Seaburn Hall over Christmas and New Year. Ronnie was now featuring Larry Day and Dorothy Clinton in the vocal department.

Towards the end of April 1949 the band set off on a three week, twenty one town tour of Ireland. Some idea of the arduous life-style endured by dance-band musicians on the road can be gained from the band's movements at the end of their visit to Ireland. Last engagement, at the town of Monaghan on the Northern Ireland border, finished in the early hours of Monday 16th May. Straight away they drive the seventy odd miles to Dublin where they catch a plane to Manchester and then take the train to Grimsby, arriving just in time to open at the Gaiety Ballroom there the same Monday evening!

The summer of 1949 was spent at Butlin's Pwllheli camp and they played a three week winter season at Ramsgate Coronation Ballroom. Ronnie continued to be a frequent broadcaster and was regularly heard on 'Music while you work' often with a string orchestra. During the fifties he was musical director of the Crazy Gang shows at London's Victoria Palace Theatre and later played Hammond organ aboard Union Castle liners. Ronnie still broadcast with a small group up until the mid-sixties, when he emigrated to South Africa, continuing his radio work there. He died on 3rd July 1989 at the grand old age of 92.

*Most of Ronnie Munro singles were issued pre-war, although he did record on Decca's wartime Music While You Work label and made six Scottish Medley singles for Beltona in 1950.*

*His was one of the first orchestra's to appear on LP in this country, with three albums issued by Decca in 1950.*

DECCA

F 9436 Jun 50 'A kiss in the dark / When you're  
away'

## Ruby MURRAY

First I have to declare a special interest in Ruby Murray, I was in love with her in the 1950's. Trouble was I wasn't the only one, over half the male population of Britain were! Sadly Ruby is no longer with us, having passed away in December 1996.

Although, red haired, blue eyed Ruby's rise to stardom in the mid 50's had a lot to do with her "shy young girl - just stepped into the limelight" image, this Irish colleen with the husky voice had in fact been performing since her school-days. Born 29<sup>th</sup> March 1935 in Belfast, the daughter of a dock worker and youngest of four children, while still at school she was already much involved in amateur concerts. Her father, who was a Scot (her mother was Irish), put them on in his spare time, one of his regular performers being the, as yet, undiscovered Ronnie Carroll. It was on one of these shows, at Dundalk, that BBC TV producer Richard Afton, on a visit to his native Ireland, saw Ruby and brought her to England to appear on one of his television shows. She sang two songs 'Sweetheart we'll never grow old' and 'I'll make up for everything'.

But, as she was only 12 at the time, it was back to school for a few more years before taking to the stage full time and this she did by joining the touring revue company led by Scottish comedian Tommy Morgan. In the show, that toured Ireland and Scotland, Ruby not only sang but also played in comedy sketches. She also appeared on Irish TV in the show 'Mulligan's Boarding House' that featured comic Jimmy O'Dea.

Early in 1954 Ruby was touring English variety theatres in an Irish show called 'Yankee Doodle Blarney' and when the show arrived at the Metropolitan Theatre in London's Edgware Road, Richard Afton who lived just round the corner, renewed the acquaintance and decided Ruby was just the girl to replace Joan Regan on his 'Quite Contrary' television series. Appearing for the first time in June 1954 singing 'Get well soon' this apparently shy unspoilt young Irish girl immediately captured the viewers' hearts, becoming an overnight success. One viewer was A & R man Ray Martin and he immediately phoned the studio, met Ruby the next day and signed her up for Columbia Records.

Her first record coupling 'Get well soon' with 'Two kinds of tears' was well received, but it was her next offering 'Heartbeat' that took her into the sales charts, rising to No.3 on the New Musical Express listing in January 1955. By then Ruby's third, and most successful recording, 'Softly softly' (a French song with English words by Paddy Roberts) was hot on the heels of 'Heartbeat' and by mid February had leap-frogged it to reach the No.1 position where it stayed three weeks, remaining in the charts for a total of 22 weeks. Not content with that, 'Happy days and lonely nights' had already sneaked in and by the final week of February she had three recordings on the Top Ten, the line up being 'Softly softly' at No.1, 'Heartbeat' at No.4 and 'Happy days and lonely nights' at No.6. And that was not all, a couple of weeks later 'Let me go lover' and 'If anyone finds this I love you' had also entered the charts, giving Ruby a total of five discs in the Top Twenty at the same time, something never achieved by any artist before.

Continued appearances on 'Quite Contrary' plus variety, in a touring show led by trumpet star Kenny Baker, ensured that by mid-1955 there couldn't have been a British household that hadn't heard of Ruby Murray "The Heartbeat Girl", and very few that didn't have at least one of her records. When she appeared as the hidden celebrity guest on TV's 'What's My Line', the panel identified her after just two questions from her voice, even though she tried to disguise it.

Having made it to the top of the hit parade, it was not long before she was promoted to the top of the bill in variety and as such she began a tour on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 1955 at the Bristol Hippodrome. Her supporting artists on the same bill included comics Jimmy Wheeler, Norman Vaughan and a virtually unknown pair, Morecambe & Wise. This nation wide tour continued throughout the early summer months visiting towns as far apart as Plymouth and Glasgow, but all this was only leading up to Ruby's biggest triumph so far, starring at the London Palladium alongside Norman Wisdom in

the revue 'Painting the Town'.

Still only 20 years old, Ruby, with her characteristic nervousness (without doubt, a large part of her charm) stood on that famous stage on opening night, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August 1955, and sang her heart out. Of course the audience loved her, especially when she sang 'Softly softly' to the accompaniment of four lady harpists. Unfortunately by the following Monday the nervous tension had gotten the better of her, causing a high temperature and a seized throat. She had to withdraw from the show and for a few days her songs were sung by 23 year old Alissande White from the George Mitchell Choir, but Ruby was soon back and the show ran until March 1956.

During 1955 Ruby's records continued to arrive and sell in great numbers; there was the double sided hit 'Happy days and lonely nights' coupled with 'Let me go lover' and the appealing 'If anyone finds this I love you', on which she was joined by another Columbia newcomer 12 year old Anne Warren. Then came 'Evermore' followed by 'I'll come when you call' and the duets from her show with Norman Wisdom, 'Two rivers' and 'Boy meets girl'. By the end of the year Ruby had taken seven songs into the Top Ten, spending a total of eighty weeks on the charts. An achievement unequalled by any female singer until Madonna arrived on the scene in the 1980's.

November 1955 also saw Ruby appearing on the Royal Variety Performance from the Victoria Palace in a show that included Johnnie Ray and another newcomer who had recently made his name on TV, Dave King.

Following the close of her Palladium show, Ruby took a well earned working holiday in the States, accompanied by her mother and Norrie Paramor her musical director at Columbia. (Bob Hope was also on the plane).

On Ruby's return from America, which coincided with the release of her recording 'I know I'm home', E.M.I. put on a big 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party for her at the Savoy Hotel with a shamrock shaped cake. They also gave her a present of a 17 inch TV set.

During April and May 1956 she was back on the road in a short variety tour supported by Audrey Jeans and that droll Scottish comedian Chic Murray with his wife Maidie. A short Continental holiday in June followed by rehearsals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July opening of a 10 week summer season at Brighton's Hippodrome in a show called 'Light up the Town' with Reg Dixon, Audrey Jeans, Tommy Fields and the George Mitchell Singers.

Amid all her other activities Ruby had still found time to make many appearances on radio and her best medium, television. On six consecutive ITV 'Saturday Showtime' shows during February and March 1956 she topped the bill with Tommy Cooper. Ruby had also moved into a luxury flat overlooking Regents Park.

1956 also saw her entry into the film world, with a voice only appearance in 'It's great to be young' the story of Angel Hill School's orchestra and the clash of ideas between teacher John Mills and headmaster Cecil Parker. She also had a small part as an Irish waitress in the corny Frankie Howerd comedy set in a holiday hotel, 'A touch of the sun'. Two songs from the film, 'In love' and

O'Malley's tango', were put on disc

Ruby's recording from the 'Great to be Young' film was 'You are my first love' and it became her first chart entry of 1956. Entering late August it followed a spell of many months when she had not been in the charts at all. After her phenomenal record success during 1955, this year was to see the beginning of her decline on the hit parade. This is not to say there was lack of interest in her as a performer, or as a recording artist for that matter.

After her summer season at Brighton, Ruby set off on a tour of A.B.C. Cinemas, taking her into towns without a large theatre. During the tour on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, she appeared in the live opening celebrations of Yorkshire's commercial television station, with Dickie Valentine and the Jack Parnell Orchestra. Following an appearance on 'Sunday night at the London Palladium' on 3<sup>rd</sup> December (a Daily Mirror Disc Festival edition with Dickie Valentine, David Whitfield and Anne Shelton), Ruby left these shores for a tour of service camps in Malta and North Africa. Advertisements in the music press Christmas editions read "Ruby Murray sends greetings from the Middle East".

Back home, in May she treated herself to a new Vauxhall Victor motor car, even though she was still only a learner driver. A month later I assume she must have passed her test, because in Blackpool, where she was spending the season, Ruby received a summons for parking her car on the highway without lights.

She was appearing in 'Bernard Delfont's 'Show Time' at the North Pier with Tommy Cooper, Ken Platt and The Morton Fraser Harmonica Gang. Also on the bill were The Four Jones Boys and on 12<sup>th</sup> August Ruby and 28 year old Bernard Burgess, baritone member of the group, announced their engagement. A week later they were married, with neither family present. Bernard arranged a special party on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September for Ruby's parents, in an attempt to patch up the ill feeling over them missing their daughter's wedding. The happy couple took a belated honeymoon in France during October.

Despite some good songs like 'It only hurts for a little while', 'Knock on any door', 'Mr. Wonderful' and 'Little white lies', Ruby hadn't managed another hit since 'You are my first love' of over a year ago, so it's not surprising one reviewer wrote "Now the novelty of her nervous mannerisms have worn off - what is left for Ruby?". Not only was she missing from the charts, she no longer appeared on the music press readers' polls. But her fans still loved her, she was on TV with Jack Jackson in his show, and with David Whitfield on his. She even did a dance routine with Tommy Steele on his BBC show.

In November she went to America to appear on U.S television's 'Big Record Show' with Patti Page. Also on the show were Guy Mitchell, Bill Haley and Harry James. Patti included a pantomime sketch in which she played Cinderella, and Ruby her wicked mother. Ruby was never very successful in the States, as she admitted in a 1992 interview with Edward Cole "They didn't take to me, they liked cheesecake and legs - to be quite honest, the Americans

didn't like me at all".

Panto for real in 1957 was at Liverpool Empire, with Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss, while husband Bernie and The Jones Boys were appearing down at Birmingham. The pair rented a flat in Crewe and both drove there each night. After the panto season they went off on an extended tour of Belgium and Germany, arriving back home in mid-April. Ruby was on Jack Jackson's TV show on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> and the following Monday began another variety tour at Leeds Empire and even though she'd not had a record in the charts since October 1956, now 18 months later she was still topping the bill. Also on the show were The Four Jones Boys and Audrey Jeans.

Bernie and the Jones Boys were still there when Ruby began her summer season on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at Great Yarmouth Wellington Pier in another Bernard Delfont show 'Light Up Again', sharing top honours with comedy-magician Tommy Cooper. On 20<sup>th</sup> July she appeared on ITV's 'Stars from the Summer Show' with Joan Regan.

4<sup>th</sup> October 1958 should have been a Ruby Murray special on ITV's 'Saturday Spectacular' but she was taken ill during rehearsals and rushed to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington and operated on for appendicitis the same evening. Jill Day filled in on TV and Petula Clark was on the same show. Out of hospital on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Ruby went home to convalesce in the new £7,000 ranch style bungalow that she and husband Bernie had just bought in millionaires' row at Oxshott, Surrey. Ruby's mother had come over from Ireland to nurse her, a bit of a disappointment as she had expected to have her little girl home for a change. Ruby had been booked to open for a week at Belfast Opera House on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

Her first engagement following the operation was another Jack Jackson television show on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, followed by the cancelled 'Saturday Spectacular' on 1<sup>st</sup> November and a 'Six Five Special' a week later.

In December 1958, with it being over two years since her last hit record and some commentators by now beginning to write her off, 'Real love', an early Bobby Darin song, entered the NME chart at No.18, but rose no higher. 'Goodbye Jimmy goodbye', Ruby's last chart entry, did better reaching No.10 in June 1959.

Still taking things easy after her illness, she only appeared as guest artist in the pantomime 'Old King Cole' that starred Vic Oliver at Dublin Theatre Royal. In February 1959 Ruby made her first London stage appearance since her London Palladium season of three years before. During her week at Finsbury Park Empire from the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Record Mirror reported that she no longer succeeded due to her "little girl lost" appeal, but now won with her professional ability, giving a relaxed pleasant performance. But the Daily Mail review took the opportunity to knock her as being out of fashion with current music trends. Ruby never did come to terms with the rock revolution. During 1959 Ruby toured extensively in variety, returning to Finsbury Park for another week in September, Bernie Burgess who had now left The Jones Boys to manage his wife's career, joined her on stage in a few numbers. In November they began a six week tour of service camps in

Malta and North Africa, but were home in time for Ruby to play Maid Marion in 'Dick Whittington' at Hulme Hippodrome, with ex-boxer Freddie Mills as Idle Jack.

Early in 1960, daughter Julie was born and Ruby decided to scale down her public appearances, but she did play a summer season at Blackpool Palace Theatre, in 'Secombe Here' with Harry Secombe and Harry Worth who was playing his first Blackpool season. She followed this with a ten day tour of Ireland and the title role in 'Cinderella' at Torquay Pavilion, with Derek Roy. Ruby continued to play summer seasons and the occasional panto throughout the sixties.

During the seventies, following a very unhappy divorce from Bernie Burgess, Ruby went through a long spell of depression consoling herself with drink, eventually entering a rehabilitation clinic. By the early nineties she had bravely fought back and got married again, to show-business agent and long-time friend Ray Lamar and was back on the road in nostalgia tours. Possibly Ruby's last television appearance was as one of the guests on a 'This is your life' tribute to Josef Locke in March 1992.

Unfortunately her new-found happiness was short lived because she died in Torbay Hospital from liver cancer on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1996 aged 61. Ruby will always be remembered for her lovely "girl next door" image and that's just the way she was; sadly missed by your scribe, a great fan.

#### Ruby Murray Recordings COLUMBIA

DB 3518 Sep 54 'Two kinds of tears / Get well soon' (acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3542 Nov 54 'Heartbeat / He's a pal of mine' (acc by RMO)

DB 3558 Jan 55 'Softly softly / What could be more beautiful'

(acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3567 Jan 55 (with Ray Burns, Diana Decker & Ronnie

Harris) 'Spring spring spring

/

co`tin`' Go in`

DB 3577 Jan 55 'Happy days and lonely nights / Let me go

lover' (acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3580 Mar 55 'Before we know it / If anyone finds this

I love you (with Anne Warren)'

(acc by RMO)

DB 3617 May 55 'Evermore / Bambino' (acc by R Martin Orch)

DB 3643 Sep 55 'I'll come when you call / It's the Irish in me'

(acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3680 Nov 55 'The very first Christmas of all / Slowly with feeling' (acc

by RMO)

DB 3715 Jan 56 (with Norman Wisdom) 'Boy meets girl /

Two rivers'

DB 3718 Jan 56 'For now for ever / (Oh please) Make him

jealous' (acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3750 Apl 56 'I know I'm home / Please hold me tightly'

(acc by Ray)

*Martin Orch*

DB 3770 May 56 'You are my first love (acc by R.ay Martin orch)

/ Honestly I do (acc by Norrie

Paramor orch)

DB 3810 Sep 56 'It only hurts for a little while (acc by Norrie

Paramor Orch) / Teddy O`Neil (acc

by RMO)

DB 3849 Nov 56 'Knock on any door / True love' (with Bill

Shepherd chorus acc by Norrie

*Paramor orch*

DB 3852 Dec 56 'In love / O`Malley`s tango'

DB 3911 Mar 57 'From the first hello to the last goodbye / Heart'

(acc by Norrie

*Paramor orch*

DB 3933 Apl 57 'Mr. Wonderful / Pretty pretty' (acc by NPO)

DB 3955 Jun 57 'Scarlet ribbons / Macushla mine' (acc NPO)

DB 3994 Sep 57 'Little white lies / Passing strangers' (acc NPO)

DB 4042 Nov 57 'Ain`t that a grand and glorious feeling /

I`ll remember today'

(acc by NPO)

DB 4075 Feb 58 'Forgive me my darling / Keep smiling at trouble'

(acc by NPO)

DB 4108 Apl 58 'In my life / Nora Malone'

(acc by Eric

Jupp Orch)

DB 4192 Sep 58 'Real love / Little one' (acc by NPO)

DB 4266 Mar 59 'Nevertheless / Who knows' (acc by NPO)

DB 4305 May 59 'Goodbye Jimmy goodbye / The humour is on me now' (acc

by NPO)

DB 4326 Jun 59 (with Brendan O`Dowda) 'A pretty Irish girl /

Connemara'

DB 4379 Nov 59 'A message from Jimmy / A voice in the choir'

DB 4426 60 'Forever / Congratulations'

DB 4497 60 'In my little corner of the world / Sweetheart of all

my dreams'

DB 4575 61 'Goodbye is the loneliest word I know / Living

for the day'

DB 4701 61 'Tammy tell me true / The faith of a child'

DB 4771 62 'Pianissimo / The diamond'

DB 4944 62 'How did he look / As simple as that' (acc by Frank

Barber Orch)

DB 7028 63 'I'm in love with the boy next door / I`ll walk the rest

of the way'

DB 7151 63 'Hurry home / Something old

something new'

DB 7491 64 'Softly softly (new jazzier arrangement) /

Promises were made to

be broken'

DECCA

F 12291 Nov 65 'The little pine tree / Silent night'

FONTANA

TF 838 May 67 'I can`t get you out of my heart / Paper mansions'

TF 914 Mar 68 'Sooner or later / Going home to my love'

PRESIDENT

PT 307 Sep 70 'Change your mind /  
Absence makes the heart

grow fonder'

PT 327 Mar 71 'It's love that counts / Ways and means'

PT 353 Nov 71 'I will wait for you / Away from you'

## The Music Press

This is just a brief reminder of the popular music periodicals available at the bookstalls during the forties and fifties.

Granddaddy of them all was 'The Melody Maker'. First issued in January 1926 by music publisher Lawrence Wright, it was the brain-child of writer Edgar Jackson (who became its first editor), and was initially sent free to members of The Lawrence Wright Orchestra Club (who received music arrangements on annual subscription). Published on a monthly basis, word of its existence soon spread through the profession and beyond. This ensured its viability and within only a few months it was available to everyone at 6d a copy, with sales heading towards the 10,000 mark. Later becoming a 'weekly' it concentrated mainly on dance bands, jazz and folk music, although by the mid-sixties it had followed the trend and contained little but hard rock. Although this marked the end as far as I was concerned, by the mid-seventies under the editorship of Ray Coleman the 'Melody maker' was still selling 200,000 copies a week, so they must have been doing something right! Unfortunately with the growth of internet sites the sale of all printed material suffered and eventually with falling sales of the Melody Maker the publisher decided in 2000 to merge it into its more popular rival paper the New Musical Express, effectively killing it off.

A popular instrument in the home and on stage during the forties was the accordion. Reflecting this, in October 1946, 'The Accordion Times and Musical Express' appeared. Fairly broad based each edition had a section devoted to accordion fans. In February 1948, while retaining its affinity to the accordion world, it shortened its title to 'Musical Express'. I'm not sure if there was dissension within, but in January 1950 the publication split in two becoming 'The Accordion Times' and 'Musical Express'. In March 1952 the latter title was relaunched as the 'New Musical Express'. Now owned by prominent music booking agent Maurice Kinn, the paper took on a slightly anti-establishment tone. The 'New Musical Express' was the first UK publication to print a regular list of the week's best selling records, the first one appearing in November 1952. The NME is still available today.

'Disc' was, as its name implied, a weekly newspaper that concentrated on record releases confining itself to the pop issues. It first came out on 8th February 1958. In 1967 it took over the 'Music Echo' becoming 'Disc and Music Echo' and then was itself taken over by 'Record Mirror' in 1976.

The first weekly issue of the 'Record Mirror' came out on Thursday 17th June 1954 with a large photo of Winifred Atwell on its front cover. It always had a large pop portrait on page one. Advertised as "The paper for all music fans", it was mainly concerned with pop music on record but covered the whole spectrum from jazz to light classics and the entertainment world in general. Also carrying a record sales chart, the NME instigated a court action in May 1956, claiming the 'Record Mirror' listing was rigged to favour certain artists. Seeking a new younger readership, in 1982 'Record Mirror' became a glossy teenage magazine but eventually closed down in April 1991.

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## Jack NATHAN

A brilliant pianist, he soon added arranging, becoming an asset to any bandleader, and it didn't take Roy Fox long to realise this after Jack joined his band in October 1932.

Originally planning on a career in accounting, he had played in semi-pro bands around London before opting for a full time musical career as a member of Jack Padbury's Band at the Prince's Restaurant in Piccadilly, moving over to Roy Fox just three months later. Jack stayed with Fox six years, then had a year in Billy Bissett's band at the Cafe de Paris, before forming his own band in September 1939 for a new nite-spot in the West End called Le Suivi.

A year later Jack was in uniform serving his country in the RAF, during which time he led his station dance band. Demobbed in 1946 he worked with Harry Hayes at Churchill's Club and his old boss Roy Fox at The Milroy. He then went into the orchestra for the show 'Annie Get Your Gun' at London Coliseum, while at the same time arranging for several top bandleaders.

In July 1947 he formed his own band again, an eight piece that replaced Jack Jackson at Churchill's, the plush society nitery in Bond Street. Vocalist with the band was Charles Judah. He was there until the club experienced a little licensing trouble and was closed by the police in January 1949. It soon re-opened and Jack, who had moved to the Nightingale, went back in April. He appeared on the Royal Variety Performance in November 1949, as pianist to 'Annie Get Your Gun' star Dolores Gray.

By 1950 his outfit (that could boast the impressive line-up of Aubrey Frank and Ronnie Scott tenor-sax, Wally Stott and Harry Klein alto-sax, Kenny Baker trumpet, Joe Muddell bass and Basil Kirchin drums) had taken up residency at the New Coconut Grove alongside the Edmundo Ros Band.

During his six year stint at the Coconut Grove, Jack and his band made several broadcasts (his first had been some private recordings made at Churchill's that were played by Ralph Moffatt over the American Forces Network from Munich in 1947 - something the

BBC quickly followed up with a Home Service broadcast on New Year's Eve 1947) and on 11th May 1951 their first television appearance came on 'It's Fun To Dance' a show that included the Butlin's Square Dance Team. Jack married dancer and cabaret artist Patricia Worth on 3rd June 1954 at the West London Synagogue.

In June 1956 Jack moved back into Churchill's Club for a further five years, until January 1961 when he took over from Woolf Phillips as leader at the famous Pigalle Restaurant. For Jack this was a full circle, because the Pigalle had previously been the Prince's where he began his professional career. The Pigalle was a show-case for many visiting American stars and during his time there Jack provided the backing for several, including Patti Page, Tony Bennett, Betty Hutton and Peggy Lee plus, of course, numerous home grown artists.

In 1966 Jack left the Pigalle and had about a year freelancing. In December 1967 he was tempted back to Churchill's for another seven year stay, then went straight from there into another night club residency (one wonders if Jack ever had an 'early night?'), his longest yet, almost eight years at the Stork Club.

During his final years at the Stork Club, Jack suffered long spells of ill health and when it closed in 1981 he gave up full time work, concentrating more on his arranging. He worked on film scores and did some special arrangements of Jewish folk songs that were broadcast by Radio Two. Jack's first recordings were as part of the Roy Fox Band in 1932 and I believe he recorded with his own band but, other than a few LP's for Philips in the late 1960's that featured current songs played in the Glenn Miller style, I'm not aware of any other issues.

## Anthony NEWLEY

Voted the most promising newcomer of 1959 by The Variety Club of Great Britain, Tony had started off in show business over ten years before on the cinema screen. His first film was 'Vice Versa' in 1947 when he was 15. It was a comedy in which, due to a magic spell, he changes places with his father (Roger Livesey). Probably his most prominent role as a child actor was the part of the Artful Dodger in David Lean's 1948 film of 'Oliver Twist', a first class movie that had John Howard Davies as Oliver, Robert Newton as Bill Sykes, Kay Walsh as Nancy and Alec Guinness as Fagin.

By the mid-fifties Anthony had already appeared in over twenty films, including 'A Boy, a Girl and a Bike', 'Vote For Huggett', 'Don't Ever Leave Me', 'Highly Dangerous', 'Top Of The Form', 'Up To His Neck' and 'Cockleshell Heroes'. But it appears his introduction to a musical performance came on stage in the revue 'Cranks', that opened at London's New Watergate Theatre in December 1955, moving to St. Martin's Theatre the following March. One of a cast of four, the others being Annie Ross, Gilbert Vernon and Hugh Bryant, Tony got to sing a number of songs that were available on an H.M.V. album of the show.

Being just a collection of rather 'off-beat' songs and sketches, 'Cranks' did little to re-

invent juvenile-actor Anthony as a pop singer. (Of course he was no longer a juvenile having been born in London on 24th September 1931) He came close when he played Frankie Vaughan's manager in 'The Lady is a Square', but it was his role as Jeep Jackson, a rock and roll singer in the 1959 film 'Idle On Parade' (his 34th film) that eventually did it. Including several songs, four were released on a Decca E.P. and one, Jerry Lordan's 'I've waited so long', became so popular it was put out as a single. By June it was No.3 in the charts, while the film's title song 'Idle on parade' reached No.13. Anthony Newley the pop singer had finally arrived.

More used to the big screen he now became a familiar face on one of those nine or twelve inch boxes in the corner of increasing numbers of front rooms across the country. On 31st May 1959, with his disc 'I've waited so long' still climbing the chart, he appeared on 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium', and over the following two years topped seven ATV 'Saturday Spectaculars'.

For a time Tony was rarely out of the charts. He had six Top Ten hits and two of them reached No.1., 'Why' and 'Do you mind', the latter a Lionel Bart number from the film 'Let's Get Married' in which Newley appeared. The other four were 'Personality' (a Lloyd Price original and a big hit in the States), 'If she should come to you' (formally the Song Festival winning Spanish tune La Montana), 'Strawberry fair' (a traditional tune with new lyrics by Nolly Clapton) and 'And the heavens cried'. His version of another traditional song, 'Pop goes the weasel', also made it to No.12, even though 'Juke Box Jury' voted it a miss.

Tony's recording company Decca put out his first LP, Love is a now and then Thing' (LK4343), a collection of mostly romantic ballads, in April 1960 and followed it just over a year later with 'Tony' (LK4406), which comprised original arrangements of traditional songs like 'Yes we have no bananas', 'Bye bye blackbird' and 'Drink to me only' etc.

During 1960 Tony toured in variety in a show promoted by Marigold Music, of which he was a director, making his debut at the Doncaster Gaumont on 22nd January 1960 on a bill with Don Lang's Frantic Five, Joe Henderson, Barbara Law and The Lindy Sisters all compered by Kent 'Cool for Cats' Walton. The same year he played the lead in an ATV series 'The Strange World Of Gurney Slade'. In what has been described a "whimsical" show he held conversations with the trees and animals! This strange world obviously proved a little too much for the viewers and it was quickly replaced by '77 Sunset Strip'.

During the sixties Newley teamed up with songwriter Leslie Bricusse and together they wrote several shows and numerous songs, the most memorable probably being Shirley Bassey's 'Goldfinger' for the James Bond film. The pair's first collaboration was the stage musical 'Stop The World I Want To Get Off', that Tony starred in at the Queen's Theatre in 1961. The show was a major success and as writer he got the best songs with 'Gonna build a mountain', 'Once in a lifetime' and 'What kind of fool am I' being the most notable. The BBC originally banned four songs from the show as being "in bad taste", but



that didn't stop it receiving the Ivor Novello award as "most outstanding stage score of the year" with 'What kind of fool am I' becoming "most outstanding song".

Newley and Bricusse next wrote 'The Roar of the Greasepaint - The Smell of the Crowd'. Although nowhere as successful as their previous show, for a time it starred Norman Wisdom and produced the song 'Who can I turn to?' It played on Broadway but never reached the West End. In 1971 they wrote 'Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory' based on Roald Dahl's story. Sammy Davis Jnr., a long time supporter of Newley-Bricusse songs, had an unexpected No.1 hit with 'Candy man' one of its numbers.

Tony was back in the West End in 1972 at St. Martin's Theatre in another Newley-Bricusse show, 'The Good Old Bad Old Days'. He described it as "pantomime for grown ups" and despite mixed reception it had a good run, with Tony on stage most of the show.

Although many found it difficult to 'warm' to Newley's style, he nevertheless continued to be in much demand as a performer, especially in the States where he was a favourite of Las Vegas audiences. Tony, who married three times, was still busy writing and performing into the nineties and renewed his association with Charles Dickens, touring in 'Scrooge the Musical'. Ever versatile, in October 1998, he was spotted playing a shady second-hand car salesman in a couple of episodes of the BBC TV soap 'Eastenders'.

Tony who fought cancer for several years finally lost the battle and died at his home in Florida on 14th April 1999.

#### Anthony Newley Recordings

DECCA

F 11127 Apl 59 'I've waited so long /  
Sat' day night rock-

a-boogie'

F 11137 May 59 'Idle on parade / Idle rock-a-boogie'

F 11142 Jun 59 'Personality / My blue angel'

F 11163 Sep 59 'Someone to love / It's all over'

F 11194 Jan 60 'Why / Anything you wanna do' (*acc by*

*Johnny*

*Gregory orch)*

F 11220 Mar60 'Do you mind / Girls were made to love

and kiss' (*acc by Johnny*

*Gregory orch)*

F 11254 Jly 60 'If she should come to you / Lifetime of

happiness' (*acc by Ian*

*Fraser orch)*

F 11295 Nov60 'Strawberry fair / A boy without a girl'

F 11331 Mar61 'Lonely boy and pretty girl / And the heavens

cried' (*acc by Ian*

*Fraser orch)*

F 11362 Jun 61 'Pop goes the weasel / Bee-bom'

F 11376 Jly 61 'What kind of fool am I / Once in a lifetime'

F 11419 Jan 62 'D-darling / I'll walk beside you'

F 11486 Jly 62 'That noise / The little golden clown'

F 11636 Apl 63 'There's no such thing as love /  
She's just

another girl'

F 11767 Nov63 'I love everything about you /  
The

father of girls'

F 11818 Jan 64 'Tribute / Lament to a hero'

F 11883 Apl 64 'I'll teach you how to cry / Solitude' (*acc by*

*Ray*

*Ellis orch)*

F 13817 Oct 78 'Why / Do you mind' (re-issues)

R.C.A.

RCA1518 May66 'Is there a way back to your arms /

Why can't you try to

didgeridoo'

RCA1637 67 'Something in your smile / I think I like you'

COLUMBIA

DB 8933 72 'The good old bad old days / Mister Sniffles'

## The New Skyliners

Formed during the early forties as the Arthur Rowberry Band they were, by 1952, resident at Nottingham Astoria, this being their first big professional booking after winning the Melody Maker All Britain Dance Band Championship the previous two years.

In July 1953 they were re-named The New Skyliners, under the lead of altoist Jack Smith, when Rowberry was given a two month jail sentence for driving while disqualified.

Their run at Nottingham came to an end late 1953 and they went on the road, backing Anne Shelton on several occasions during 1955 and 1956. After that they seem to disappear.

## Penny NICHOLLS

Penny was a singer with enormous talent and vitality, but without a hit record she remained virtually unknown to many of the record buying public, with most of her recorded output being on the low cost Embassy label.

A pint sized pretty blonde, born Jessie Nicholson in Clapham, South West London, she had won several prizes for singing and dancing before she was ten. In 1935, when she was about eight, an event took place that was to shape much of her professional life. At a Ramsgate summer show where Billy Merrin and his Commanders were supplying the music, Penny was a young member of the audience who came on stage to 'do her thing'. Billy immediately saw the show business possibilities for young Miss Nicholson. Having kept in touch with her parents, by the close of the thirties Penny was appearing regularly with Billy and his band, and appeared with them in the film 'The Show's The Thing' that also featured Ronald Frankau. In the meantime she had also won the All Britain Tap Dancing Championship - some girl!

During the war, when Billy broke up the band, Penny spent three years with Ivor Kirchin's outfit at the Paramount Dance Salon in Tottenham Court Road, then entertained on troop concerts around the country for the Red Cross. After the war she had a year with Teddy Foster's Band, but by 1947 was back with Billy Merrin, now resident at Nottingham's Old Greyfriars Hall (that soon became the Astoria Ballroom). During

the summer she joined the band, performing for holidaymakers at Herne Bay Central Bandstand. On 30th November 1948 she began her own radio series, 'Penny Serenade', on the BBC Midlands Home Service.

During 1949 Penny toured with Billy on mainly one night stands, and they also played another summer season at Herne Bay. At the end of October 1949 the third series of 'Penny Serenade' took to the air, and she made other broadcasts including one with the newly formed Ken Mackintosh Orchestra, now resident at the Astoria, during November. From December Penny was assured her greatest exposure yet, when she was picked by Henry Hall to be resident singer on his radio 'Guest Night' shows.

When the series ended almost a year later she joined forces again with Billy Merrin (who had now given up bandleading) working as a double act in variety. Versatile Penny, appeared on stage in true concert party tradition wearing blazer, skirt and straw hat, and not only sang but did impressions, danced and played ukulele with Billy accompanying her on piano. Billy's jolly outgoing personality was an ideal complement to Penny's stage presentation and his musical skills an enormous asset. The association lasted many years and together they travelled all over the world. Billed as Penny Serenade their first variety date was 1st October 1950 at Kettering Savoy Theatre. During the early months of 1951 the pair toured in a package show called 'Radio's 1951 Star Parade', with a young Harry Secombe and the singing Tanner Sisters. Reviews said she was "a versatile little songstress heading for the top". Another review in the 1st July 1954 edition of 'Performer' said of her, "Penny's style, dynamic personality and stage craft is way ahead of the average girl vocalist".

During the early fifties Penny and Billy travelled thousands of miles, appearing in almost every variety theatre in the land. The summer of 1952 took them back to the town where they had first met almost twenty years earlier, Ramsgate, with a season at The Granville Pavilion.

On radio they were on 'Workers Playtime', 'Variety Playhouse', 'Music Hall' and other shows in that mould and also did the occasional television. On variety bills they were advertised as 'The Dynamic Stars of Radio and T.V'.

Penny almost certainly made her recording debut pre-war, as vocal refrain on one of the Billy Merrin Orchestra discs made for the Eclipse label. Towards the end of 1951 she made the first of a few H.M.V recordings, coupling a version of the big American hit (for The Four Knights vocal group and Eddy Howard's Orchestra among others) 'It's no sin' with 'Love me, love me, love me'. The latter side got a lot of air plays by Jack Jackson on his 'Record Round Up'. After H.M.V. dropped her she made a couple of discs for the obscure Planet label. When in 1954 Woolworth Stores began their own Embassy series, Penny was one of the first artists on the label with two records in the first dozen issued. Her first disc coupled the South African import 'Skokiaan', a minor hit, with the more pleasant Billy Merrin number 'Alladin's lamp'. Over the next few years she made eleven singles for the label. Like most Embassy issues

they were mainly cover versions of popular songs of the day.

Amid a life of continual travelling, including a tour of the Middle East in The Harry Secombe Show, a chance to set down roots for a while was provided by a 1955 summer season in 'Showtime' at Weymouth's Alexandra Theatre on a bill topped by Derek Roy. Later in the year she joined Richard Murdoch in the pantomime 'Dick Whittington' at the Southport Garrick Theatre.

In 1956 there was another summer show, 'Toast of the Town' at the Palace Theatre, Isle of Man. More touring on a bill with the legendary Max Miller took them up to panto time again at Chatham Empire where Penny played the title role in 'Aladdin' with Des O'Connor as Wishee Washee. Billy Merrin was musical director for the show, arranging the music and conducting the orchestra.

By 1957 rock and roll was having a big influence on all facets of the entertainment world and no exception was variety, already suffering from ever increasing sales of television sets. Many variety packages were now rock and roll based and more by circumstance than by choice Penny joined one headed by Tony Crombie (a drummer of some worth) and his Rockets. Although versatile enough to be a match for any style of song she possibly considered that at thirty she was a bit old for this sort of thing (most of her fellow performers had hardly left school) and by March was back on a more conventional bill, 'Keep 'em Laughing' with Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss.

In September she did a couple of weeks at London's Metropolitan Theatre with skiffler Nancy Whiskey top of the bill. At least one reviewer noted "vivacious little Penny showed more star quality than Miss Whiskey". Panto in 1957 was a leading role in 'Goody Two Shoes' at Reading's Palace Theatre.

From March 1958 Penny did a three month season at the Glasgow Pavilion, followed by a further three months, from the end of June at Scarborough's Futurist Theatre with fellow singer Ronnie Hilton in Cyril Stapleton's Band Show. She also broadcast with the Stapleton Orchestra. In December she returned to the Glasgow Pavilion for their pantomime 'Jack and Jill' with Jack Milroy and Jimmy Neil. Back on the road in February 1959 she toured in a show headed by comedian Al Read and joined him for the summer in Bernard Delfont's 'You'll Be Lucky' at Morecambe Winter Gardens.

In 1960 Penny began a long association with the stage version of the popular television show 'The Black and White Minstrels', which took her all the way to Australia. Having worked apart for a couple of years, this was the tour that brought Penny and Billy Merrin back together again, but for the last time as Billy gave up the business soon after.

Penny continued to remain busy and played regular summer seasons through till the mid-seventies when she had more or less retired and settled down in Manchester. Unfortunately she never seemed to get the break she deserved, but although she was never a 'big star' she was never out of work either and all who remember her on stage must agree she was not just a singer but a real entertainer, able to give any song a visual

interpretation.

- Penny Nicholls Recordings  
H.M.V.
- B 10185 Dec 51 'It's no sin / Love me love me love me'  
(acc by Frank Cordell Orch)
- B 10241 Apl 52 (with George Elliott guitar)  
'Poor-whip-poor-will'  
(Tanner Sisters on reverse)
- B 10447 Mar 53 'I'd love to fall asleep / Take a chance'
- PLANET (acc by Jack Leon Orch)
- E 1003 Mar 54 'I'm saying a prayer / Love's a gamble'  
(both B.Merrin compositions)
- E 1005 Apl 54 'Lobster quadrille / Dozens of ducks'
- EMBASSY
- WB 110 Dec 54 'Skokiaan / Aladdin's lamp'  
WB 111 Dec 54 'This ole house / Please opportunity'  
WB 123 Feb 55 (with Four-in-a-Chord) 'Let me go lover /  
Heartbeat'  
WB 134 Jly 55 'The crazy Otto rag / Our old pi-anna'  
WB 156 Nov 55 'The banjo's back in town / Give me a band  
and my baby' (acc by Johnny Gregory orch)
- WB 157 Dec 55 'Steam heat / The longest walk'  
WB 176 Mar 56 (with The Canadians) 'The rock and roll waltz  
/ You can't chop your poppa up in Massachusetts'  
WB 188 Jun 56 'Seven days / Don't ringa da bell'  
WB 190 Jun 56 'Hot diggity / Bo weevil' (acc by Ken Jones orch)
- WB 224 Feb 57 'I dreamed / You don't owe me a thing'  
WB 228 Mar 57 'Knee deep in the blues / What's the reason'
- ORIOLE
- CB 1433 Apl 58 'Strictly sentimental / Call me'

## Joy NICHOLS

Joy is probably only remembered by a British public who have reached what is generally termed 'middle age'. They will no doubt associate her with that early post war radio comedy success 'Take it From Here', but Joy had been performing long before and continued to do so long after her spell with T.I.F.H.

Born in Sydney, Australia on 17th February 1927, and taught singing, dancing and mimicry by her mother, she began her show business career as a seven year old, playing Tiny Tim on radio. Joy went on to become presenter of the popular 'Australian Youth Show', a radio programme sponsored by Colgate Toothpaste, and later had her own 'Presenting Joy Nichols' series of comedy and song. She also appeared on stage in a song, comedy and dance act with her brother George. Just after the war she played one of the leading roles in an Australian

film released in Britain in 1947 as 'Southern Cross'.

In 1946 Joy decided the way forward was in Britain and with brother George set sail for London. Just in case it didn't work out and to ensure she wasn't forgotten at home, before leaving she recorded 52 episodes of her current show 'Jackaroo Joy' for broadcast after she had gone.

Arriving in Britain and armed with recommendations from Australian radio producers, one an ex-BBC man Harry Pringle, they made for Broadcasting House and were given a spot on a Henry Hall 'Guest Night' programme. The pair also appeared on television, a service still in its infancy. Joy, with her confidence and quick witted humour, obviously impressed, for in July 1947 she was given the job of presenting the last series of the war time show 'Navy Mixture', where regulars included comedian Jimmy Edwards, fresh from his success at the Windmill Theatre, and memory man Leslie Welch.

In November 1947 Joy made what appears to be her first record here, on one side of a Decca single singing 'There ought to be a society' with Harry Roy and his band. By now George, not having the same determination as his sister, had returned home.

Producer of 'Navy Mixture' was Charles Maxwell and when he was considering a new series built around Jimmy Edwards he decided to add Joy along with fellow Australian Dick Bentley. The result, 'Take it From Here', was on air for the first time on 12th March 1948. Slow to start the programme soon built up to become one of radio's most successful ever, not least for the characterisations brought to it by Joy, an expert at imitating dialects, who also had a song spot each week.

1948 was a big year for Joy; she got married to fellow singer Wally Peterson, an American who had come to Britain with the stage musical 'Oklahoma'. Decca Records saw her as an ideal partner for Benny Lee on light hearted comedy songs and from November 1948 they recorded several sides together.

With all the public approval on radio and record it was inevitable that she should appear on the variety stage and her debut was a prestigious one, at the London Palladium on Monday 6th June 1949 on a bill topped by The Ink Spots. Joy was an enormous success, her act took three curtain calls and after returning to her dressing room she had to come back because the audience wouldn't stop clapping. A stage hand is reported as saying he'd "not seen anything like it in over ten years". In November the same year she was one of the stars of the Royal Command Performance at the London Coliseum.

During 1950 Joy, with Jimmy Edwards and Dick Bentley, toured in 'Take it From Us' (the BBC wouldn't allow them to use the original name) including a summer season at Blackpool Winter Gardens.

In January 1952, almost two years since her last Decca issue, Joy was back on disc with Parlophone singing her version of Johnnie Ray's hit 'The little white cloud that cried'. On the reverse she was doing 'The old soft shoe' shuffle with husband Wally. During 1952 Joy took time

off to have a baby (a daughter Roberta) and Sally Rogers filled in on T.I.F.H. By October Joy was back on stage at the London Palladium in the revue 'Wonderful Time' with Max Bygraves and the Billy Cotton Band. During November she was on the Royal Command Performance for the second time in a music hall songs selection. Just before Christmas, Joy and the cast of 'Wonderful Time' moved over to the London Hippodrome (making way for the Palladium pantomime 'Dick Whittington' starring Frankie Howerd). Ted Ray replaced Max Bygraves.

By mid 1953 Joy was becoming increasingly homesick and suffering depression, so Wally decided the family would take a long holiday in Australia. As she would not be available for the November 1953 T.I.F.H. series the BBC had to find a suitable replacement and Joy's versatility is demonstrated by the need of two girls to replace her, Alma Cogan for the songs and June Whitfield for the comedy sketches. 'Take it From Here' continued to run until 1959 but Joy never returned to it. Before leaving she recorded the comedy number 'Little Red Monkey' with Dick and Jimmy on Parlophone, her last on that label.

After their holiday the Peterson family travelled to America where Wally had contracts to fulfil. His commitments there ensured they crossed the Atlantic many times over the years. By mid 1954 Joy was back in Britain touring in variety, while on radio she was one of the regular members of 'The Forces Show'. She completed the year playing 'Dick Whittington' at the Palace Theatre Manchester alongside Brian 'PC 49' Reece as Idle Jack and The Radio Revellers. The panto played until March and it was that month that Joy again reappeared on record, this time on the American Mercury label (possibly her trans-Atlantic life accounted for this) singing 'Danger heartbreak ahead'.

In May 1955 she began her own radio series 'Shout For Joy' on Tuesday evenings with The Nicholodeons and the BBC Revue Orchestra conducted by Harry Rabinowitz. Television included Henry Hall's 'Face the Music' and 'Saturday Night Date'.

On 13th October 1955 Joy opened at the London Coliseum playing the leading role in the musical 'The Pajama Game' opposite Edmund Hockridge, a show that ran until 1957. Recordings from the show were issued on H.M.V.

She had a small role, singing 'The sadness goes on', in Charlie Chaplin's 1957 film 'A King in New York', but by October that year she was back working in the States, as was husband Wally and it was there that she now began to spend most of her time.

Joy made her Broadway debut during February 1959 in the musical 'Redhead', which starred Gwen Verdon. One part of the show featured Madame Tussaud's Waxworks where Joy had actually already been on display in wax. Her part in the show was of a comedy nature not affording her a chance to sing. Probably her biggest Broadway role came in November 1959 when she opened in the musical 'Fiorello', a story all about the mayor of New York.

The later years of Joy's career were not too successful, her marriage broke up and work became less frequent, with bit parts on stage and television. Life became something of a

disappointment and she took a job as a receptionist at the American book publishers Doubleday. For a while she came back to London and worked at a store in Oxford Street, but looking back to the happy days of the early fifties must have given her some satisfaction.

Joy Nichols died in New York on the 23rd June 1992 aged sixty five.

Joy Nichols Recordings

DECCA

F 8896 Nov 47 (with Harry Roy Band)  
"There ought to be  
a society"

(The next five discs are with Benny Lee)

F 9032 Nov 48 'The pussy cat song / Bounce-y  
bounce-y ball-y (with The  
Keynotes)

(acc by Stanley

Black Orch)

F 9094 Mar 49 'On the Five Fourty-five / You was'  
(with The

Keynotes acc by Nat

Temple Orch)

F 9105 Mar 49 'A strawberry moon / Ah tra la la your  
kiss

(with The Keynotes)' (acc by  
Stanley

Black Orch)

F 9162 Jun 49 'I do I do I do / Aw c`mon' (with The  
Keynotes acc by Nat

Temple Orch)

F 9177 Jly 49 'The story of the lovebirds / Look at  
me' (plus

The Keynotes acc by Nat

Temple Orch)

F 9179 Jly 49 'Great guns (with The Keynotes) / But  
nobody

(with Johnny Johnston & Alan

Dean)

(both acc by Nat

Temple Orch)

F 9212 Sep 49 (with Benny Lee) 'The merry go round  
polka /

The frogzee and flyzee' (plus The

Keynotes

acc by Stanley Black's

Blacksmiths)

F 9234 Oct 49 'A dreamers holiday / Lovers lane has  
everything' (with TK

acc by NTO)

F 9280 Nov 49 'Lingering down the lane /  
Gotta love

you till I die'

F 9317 Jan 50 'Why not now / Don`t laugh' (acc by  
NTO)

F 9333 Feb 50 'Cherry stones / In the chapel of San  
Remo

(with The Temple Belles)

(acc by NTO)

PARLOPHONE

R 3489 Jan 52 'The little white cloud that cried (with  
the

Men of Song) / The old soft

shoe (with

Wally

Peterson)

R 3507 Mar 52 'Speak a word of love / Froggie and  
the catfish'

R 3537 Jun 52 'Lullaby for Johnny / Piana Anna'

R 3554 Jly 52 (with Wally Peterson) 'Trust in me /  
(reverse

W.Peterson only)

R 3613 Dec 52 'That`s the way to write a love song  
(with

Wally Peterson) / The

inch worm'

R 3666 Apl 53 'I talk to the trees / The  
hippopotamus song'

(acc by Frank

Chacksfield orch)

R 3684 Apl 53 (with Dick Bentley and Jimmy  
Edwards)

'Little red monkey / Me

an` Johnny'  
MERCURY

MB 3212 Apl 55 'Danger heartbreak ahead /  
My crazy little

mixed up heart'

MB 3224 May55 'I've got a feeling your fooling /  
Don't worry'

*An L.P. by the cast of 'The Pajama Game' including Joy  
Nichols was issued on H.M.V. CLP 1062 in December  
1955. There was also an E.P. that included her singing  
'Small Talk' with Ted Hockridge.*

## Lisa NOBLE

A five foot two, attractive rock and roll singer from Cardiff, Lisa burst on to the record scene in April 1958 with her Decca offering 'Maggie! - Yes Ma!', backed by 'Who's sorry now'. Seventeen year old Lisa had been appearing on the stage since she was twelve, and had earned herself the title "The female Tommy Steele".

She was plugging her disc on Jack Jackson's ITV show on Saturday 7th April and on the BBC's 'Six Five Special' on the 19th. In August Decca issued her second record and in the same month she made her debut in variety at Middlesbrough Empire. She donated part of the royalties from this second disc to The Sunshine Home For Blind Children.

After that, due to illness, she dropped out of sight and the only other report I have of her is a tour in a package headed by Cliff Richard from 18th October 1959.

Lisa Noble Recordings

DECCA (acc on both by Eric Rogers orch)

F 11006 Apl 58 'Maggie! - Yes Ma! / Who's sorry  
now'

F 11051 Aug 58 'It's a boy / The saints'

## Monty NORMAN

Monty has lived comfortably for most of his life on the royalties he earns from having written the James Bond theme. Born in London in 1928, began his working life towards the end of the war years as a hairdresser in Stoke Newington. Known as "the singing barber" he drifted into a musical career by singing in local clubs, slowly working up to the better class West End establishments and minor variety bookings. During the early fifties he was to be heard regularly on radio in 'Top Score' with Stanley Black and his Orchestra, where a fellow vocalist was Diana Coupland (later to become Mrs. Norman). In June 1950 he was doing a season of cabaret at Selby's Club with four girls billed as 'The O'Keefe Sisters and Monty Norman'. They also toured in variety and during August did some concerts at Nuremburg, Germany, on a bill with Anne Shelton and the Kathy Stobart Band. (The O'Keefe Sisters were

Carole and Katherine Ibbott who along with Pat and Joy O'Keefe had been touring as a vocal quartet since 1947. Before joining Monty they had worked with Bobby Richards and after their spell with Monty they then teamed up with singer Ken Beaumont)

Late in 1950 he had a spell singing with Archie May's Band at Cricklewood Palais. A period of touring with the Nat Temple Orchestra lasted until May 1951 when Monty joined Cyril Stapleton for the summer season at the Palace Ballroom, Douglas on the Isle of Man. Monty toured with the Stapleton orchestra until Cyril disbanded in September 1952 to form the BBC Show Band.

Monty's recording output began with the small Polygon label late in 1952, when he made a couple of records backed by the Frank Chacksfield Orchestra. One of them only ever got issued on one side of an Australian Radiola label disc, with Petula Clark on the reverse. Within a year he had moved over to the E.M.I. stable, first with Columbia and later on H.M.V. Although never a big success his recordings were nevertheless well worth a hearing and covered some of the mid-fifties' most pleasing ballads. Monty made a number of multi-track discs (quite a new idea at the time). His last H.M.V coupling 'The garden of Eden' with 'Priscilla' (the same A & B sides as Frankie Vaughan's chart topper on Philips) in January 1957 was obviously an "if you can't beat them, join them" answer to the new generation of beat singers who were pushing the early fifties ballad singers like Monty out of the way.

During 1953 he was playing one night stands with the Stanley Black Orchestra, where his fellow vocalist was Diana Coupland again, until he opted to continue as a solo artist, making his variety debut at Chelsea Palace on Monday 5th October in the show 'On View to You'. He then toured in another variety package 'This was the Army'. The summer months of 1954 were spent at Blackpool in the Opera House show 'Talk of the Town' with Jimmy Edwards, Tony Hancock and the lady with a multi octave voice, Joan Turner. Another variety tour, 'It's a Record', followed, with several other recording artists including Diana Coupland.

Later, in July 1955, Monty and Diana made a two month tour of service camps in Europe and the Middle East together and on one of Jack Jackson's television shows the following November announced their engagement. They married on 27th May 1956 at St. John's Wood Synagogue, London.

Although he continued to broadcast and tour widely in variety, Monty began more to turn to other branches of the music business including writing musicals. Late in 1957, along with David Heneker, he wrote the music and lyrics for the Wolf Mankowitz success 'Expresso Bongo'. This they followed with the English book and lyrics for 'Irma la Douce' that opened at the Lyric Theatre in July 1958.

In 1959 they again collaborated with Mankowitz on 'Make me an Offer' which was produced at the Theatre Royal, Stratford in October with Diana Coupland in one of the leading roles. Others in the cast included Sheila Hancock, Dilys Laye, Roy Kinnear and Daniel

Massey. Another Mankowitz show Monty worked on was 'Belle', a musical based on mass murderer Dr.Crippen, which opened at The Strand Theatre on 4th May 1961. Monty was also a director of music publishers Britannia Music.

Monty was responsible for the music score of 'Doctor No', the first Bond film and has always been credited with writing the original James Bond theme, although John Barry, who wrote a lot of the later Bond music, recently laid claim to the theme. It took a court battle to finally establish the original theme was Monty's

Monty, whose marriage eventually broke up, continued to write for films and stage shows through to the eighties, and now lives comfortably off the royalties.

#### Monty Norman Recordings

RADIOLA (Australian label - recorded by Polygon)

A069P 52 'Takes two to tango'

#### POLYGON

P 1051 Oct 52 'You belong to me / Melody' (acc by Frank Chacksfield Orch)

P 1053 Nov 52 'Takes two to tango / The valley of the roses' (acc by Frank Chacksfield Orch)

P 1069 May 53 (with The Coronets) 'Cuban love song /

Sleepless nights'

#### COLUMBIA

DB 3305 Jun 53 'I'm the king of broken hearts / Till they've

all gone home' (acc by Ray

Martin Orch)

DB 3339 Sep 53 'False hearted lover / No escape'

DB 3398 Nov 53 'Answer me / From here to eternity'

DB 3435 Feb 54 'Secret love / Why does it have to be me'

DB 3452 Apr 54 'I've lost my heart to you / If there is a

mountain'

DB 3498 Jly 54 'Somebody bigger than you or I / Third little

turning' (acc by Eric

Jupp orch)

DB 3538 Nov 54 'The things I didn't do / Caring' (acc by

Eric

Jupp orch)

DB 3571 Feb 55 'Give me the right / The flame'

#### H.M.V.

B 10889 Jun 55 'I don't want to be lonely tonight / What will I tell

my heart'

POP 145 Nov 55 'The shifting whispering sands / Bonnie blue

gal' (acc by Reg

Owen orch)

POP 281 Jan 57 'The garden of Eden / Priscilla' (acc by

Frank

Cordell orch)

## Northern Dance Orchestra

Based at the BBC studios in Manchester, the Northern Dance Orchestra was created in September 1956 as a scaled down version of the BBC Northern Variety Orchestra. It nevertheless went on to build a high reputation as a radio orchestra, only matched by the BBC Show Band.

The BBC Northern Variety Orchestra had been around since 1948, supporting numerous variety and musical programmes. In 1956 the string and woodwind sections were disbanded, leaving just violinist Norman George. With the addition of Jimmy Leach on organ it was renamed the BBC Dance Band of the North, soon referred to as the Northern Dance Orchestra.

Alyn Ainsworth who had been an arranger and deputy conductor with the variety orchestra, took over as leader of the dance band. Indicating its new style the outfit appeared at the Jazz Jamboree, an annual event held at Kilburn's Gaumont State Theatre during October 1956. This was the first time a BBC staff orchestra had appeared there. It made another of its rare public appearances in December at Levensholm Palais, Manchester, playing for the Musicians' Union Ball.

The television series 'Make Way for Music' produced by Barney Colehan, and featuring the orchestra with singers Sheila Buxton and Roberto Cardinali was first transmitted nationwide on 14th January 1959. The same year, during June, they performed before Her Majesty the Queen and the Queen Mother on a Royal Command Performance held at Manchester's Palace Theatre.

Although the orchestra never made any commercial recordings, Alyn Ainsworth and his orchestra, during the late 1950's, made a number of recordings for Parlophone. Having no other orchestra to call upon, it's reasonable to assume that many of the musicians on these recordings were from his BBC team.

Alyn Ainsworth gave up as leader in 1960 to concentrate on arranging. He was replaced first by Tommy Watt and later Bernard Hermann. To match it's more pop image during the sixties, the orchestra became referred to as just the N.D.O. It was renamed the Northern Radio Orchestra in 1974 and disbanded altogether in another cost cutting exercise in 1981.

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## Cavan O'CONNOR

Not Irish as many people assumed, Cavan was born towards the end of the 19th century at Nottingham, and during the 1930's and 40's became a firm favourite and very much associated with the songs 'Only a strolling vagabond' and 'I'll take you home again Kathleen'.

His first job was in the (then!) thriving Nottinghamshire coalfields, working down the mines. Already the possessor of a fine tenor

voice, Cavan won a prize for his song and dance act in a talent contest at the Gateshead Hippodrome (it burnt down before 1920 and was later replaced by a Woolworth Store). On the outbreak of the First World War he joined the Royal Horse Artillery as a boy soldier, and saw service on the western Front.

After the war Cavan won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and in 1925 began a career in opera. But he soon found that a more popular style of singing brought greater rewards and throughout the thirties sang with many of the top dance bands, including Jack Hylton, Geraldo and Joe Loss. He made hundreds of records often under assumed names, depending on the recording company he was working for. Some of the known ones are Cliff Connolly, Pat O'Dell, Terence O'Neill and Pat O'Brian, but there were others.

In 1935 Cavan was the anonymous singer on a new BBC radio series 'The Vagabond Lover' and became a mysterious and extremely popular unknown celebrity. When a national newspaper finally revealed his identity, he went on to even greater fame and fortune.

Cavan first heard the song 'Only a strolling vagabond', a tune from a German opera, during a recording session in Berlin. With English words, he turned it into an instant success and it became forever associated with him.

His stage presentation matched the song, always dressed in old corduroy trousers with an open neck shirt plus cravat, a floppy trilby and a shabby jacket tossed over his shoulder, he would stroll on stage and with no effort and little movement, hold the audience mesmerized by his brilliant singing. His repertoire encompassed opera, the musicals, ballads and the current pop, with Cavan at ease with them all. As his act came to its end he would just stroll off stage, as the spotlights dimmed, to thunderous applause.

During the WW II years Cavan did much broadcasting, moving with the BBC Variety Department to Bangor in North Wales. He also did summer variety seasons at the Blackpool Palace Theatre in 1943 with comedienne Suzette Tarri and the Two Leslies, and 1944 with that inimitable Yorkshire comedian Sandy Powell.

The other song Cavan made very much his own, 'I'll take you home again Kathleen', he first heard on a music box in the house he was living in at Bangor. Tracing the words he found them to have originated, not across the Irish Sea, but across the Atlantic, being an 1870's Kentucky tune reported to have been written in answer to an earlier song 'Barny take me back again'.

During the early fifties Cavan travelled widely in variety and broadcast regularly on several programme's including 'Howerd's Crowd' with Frankie Howerd, 'Variety Fanfare', 'Down Memory Lane' and was a regular top of the bill on 'Mid-Day Music Hall'.

Towards the end of the decade he was putting much of his energy into teaching up-and-coming new singers, while doing the occasional week in variety.

By the mid-seventies, although relaxing in semi-retirement with his wife Rita (they had married back in 1929), he was still to be found playing the odd summer season like Eastbourne in 1973 and Lowestoft in 1975. Already an

octogenarian he was back topping the bill at the Hackney Empire in 1985.

In February 1992, and by then ninety plus, but reportedly still fit and well and exercising voice and body every day, Cavan was on Radio Two hosting a programme, 'Cavan O'Connor's Cuttings', on which he reminisced about his long career.

Failing to quite make his century, Cavan died on 11th January 1997, aged 97. Although he made a lot of records pre-war, I can only find just two that were issued after.

#### DECCA

F 8852 Mar 48 'I'll take you home again Kathleen / Kathleen Mavourneen' (*acc by Jay*)

*Wilbur Orch*

F 9259 Nov 49 'My Irish song of songs / Bantry Bay' (*acc by Jay*)

*Wilbur Orch*

## Kathran OLDFIELD

Voted "one of Canada's most beautiful women", Kathran (Kip to her friends) was already well known on Canadian radio, singing with Frank Bogart's Orchestra, when she came to Britain in June 1949. On 18th June, 23 year old Kathran was heard on radio's 'In Town Tonight' and on 2nd July was seen on televisions 'Rooftop Rendezvous', singing with Eric Robinson and his orchestra. By October she had joined two fellow Canadian's and was featured vocalist, alongside Denny Vaughan, on Robert Farnon's Sunday lunchtime series 'Journey Into Melody'. She also broadcast with the Syd Dean and Ray Martin orchestras. Kathran appeared in cabaret at London West End clubs and in 1950 recorded for Esquire with Norman Stanfelt's Men About Town.

For two years Kathran was one of the mainstays on the Empire Pools Sunday evening Radio Luxembourg show 'Soccer Songtime', following this up in 1952 with 'Tokalon Time' for the Tokalon Beauty Products Company. She also appeared on television with comedian Eric Barker.

During 1952 she decided to drop the 'Old' from her surname and became known as Kathran Field. In November 1952 she left for T.V. dates in America and it's possible she never came back, as I can find no further mention of her.

#### Kathran Oldfield / Field Recordings

#### ESQUIRE

5-003 Sep 50 (*with the Men About Town*) 'Wedding gown /

Just couldn't

say goodbye'

5-004 Sep 50 " " " 'Count every star /

Poor

little rich girl'

5-032 Aug 51 'What a cute little hat (*with Robert Beatty*) /

Honey lip (*duet*

*with herself*)

(*all future issues as Kathran Field*)

5-063 Jun 52 (*with Johnny Dankworth Strings*)

'Down  
 never knew'  
 5-064 Jun 52 (with the Men About Town) 'Singing  
 in the rain  
 /  
 Marrying time'  
 VOGUE (with Bill McGuffie Quartet)  
 V 9036 Jun 52 'A little love / Your guiding hand'  
 V 9037 Jun 52 'Peace of mind / I go for you'

## Eileen ORCHARD

Eileen, who began her show-business career as a dancer, although she also trained as an opera singer, is unlikely to be remembered for either. If you recall her at all it is probably for the short time she sang with Lou Preager's Dance Band at the Hammersmith Palais during the late forties.

Entering the business as soon as she left school at 14, she started at the top, joining a touring version of Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon's popular wartime radio show 'Hi Gang'. The show took Eileen across Europe, where she broadcast over the American Forces Network singing with the American Air Force band The Esquires.

Back on home ground, she did some more touring in the show 'Cage Me A Bluebird', a slightly naughty tale about the ancient Romans in Britain, that starred Phyllis Robins and on which the promoter lost his money!

Next Eileen had a spell in London's clubland where she was spotted by Lou Preager and she joined his band at Hammersmith Palais on Easter Monday in April 1947. Alongside Preager's long time vocalist Paul Rich, Eileen proved to be a useful addition to the band's slick presentation. As well as her solo spots she was also a member of The Sunnysiders vocal group, where a fellow member was trombonist Don Lusher who obviously caught her eye. The pair married in March 1948 and by the end of the year both had left the band. Don joined Maurice Winnick's band at Ciro's Club then worked with The Squadronaires and Ted Heath, but I've not discovered any further reports of Eileen after this time, except that she died on 27th March 1981 aged 54.

During her time with Lou she added the vocal refrain to several of the band's Columbia recordings.

Eileen Orchard Recordings

COLUMBIA (with Lou Preager Band)

FB 3323 Aug 47 'The first day of summer'  
 FB 3330 Sep 47 'It's dreamtime'  
 FB 3331 Sep 47 'It's never too late to mend'  
 FB 3352 Nov 47 'Christmas dreaming'  
 FB 3367 Jan 48 'Au revoir'  
 FB 3368 Jan 48 'The shoemakers serenade'  
 FB 3383 Mar 48 'Whisper that you love me'  
 FB 3408 Jly 48 'Don't call it love'  
 FB 3422 Sep 48 'The Woody Woodpecker song'  
 FB 3427 Oct 48 'I'd give a million tomorrows'  
 FB 3436 Nov 48 'When the organ played Ave Maria'  
 FB 3451 Jan 49 'Underneath the Linden tree'

## Cyril ORNADEL

Probably the youngest ever MD of West End shows, Cyril not only conducted the orchestra, but wrote the music for many of them too. Born in 1924, he studied bass and piano at London's Royal College of Music.

In 1945 Cyril toured Germany as accompanist to singer Dorothy Carless and also worked on stage with Max Bacon. He began directing the music for touring revues and was soon spotted by Jack Hylton who signed him as Musical Director for 'Take It From Us', the stage version of radio's 'Take It From Here', at London's Victoria Palace in 1950 when Cyril was just 25. He stayed with the show when it moved to the Blackpool Winter Gardens for the summer, and to London's Adelphi Theatre later.

In 1951 he took over the baton for 'Kiss Me Kate' at the London Coliseum and the following year 'Call Me Madam' at the same theatre. In 1953 it was 'Paint Your Wagons' at Her Majesty's and during the fifties Cyril was MD of several other London shows including 'Wish You Were Here', 'Pal Joey', 'Wonderful Town', 'Kismet', 'Plain and Fancy' and 'My Fair Lady'.

Not content to direct other composers' music, he began writing his own and in February 1956 'Starmaker', for which he wrote the score, opened at Glasgow with Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge. He was appointed musical adviser to World Record Club and also arranged and conducted on Philips recording sessions.

In 1957 Cyril replaced Eric Rogers as conductor of the London Palladium Orchestra, where for many years he was responsible for backing some of the world's top stars. On his first week in the job, from Monday 29th April, the top of the bill act were The Platters. He scored some of the famous Palladium pantomimes, including 'Humpty Dumpty' with Harry Secombe and Gary Miller in 1959.

Cyril continued to be associated with musical comedy and wrote the music to Leslie Bricusse lyrics for 'Pickwick', an adaptation by Wolf Mankowitz of Dickens' 'Pickwick Papers', that starred Harry Secombe at the Saville Theatre in 1963. He also provided the music to David Croft's lyrics for 'Ann Veronica' produced at the Cambridge Theatre in 1969 and scored Bernard Miles' version of 'Treasure Island' that featured Spike Milligan at The Mermaid in December 1973.

He was musical director of 'The King and I' that starred Yul Brynner at The Palladium in 1979, 'The Sound of Music' with Petula Clark at the Apollo Victoria in 1981 and 'Winnie', for which he also supplied some of the music, at Victoria Palace in 1988.

Cyril recorded several albums of show tunes on the World Records and M.G.M. labels, but made very few instrumental singles.

Cyril Ornael Orchestra Recordings  
 PHILIPS

PB 235 Feb 54 'Carnavalito' (Wally Stott Orch on reverse)

M.G.M.

SP 1141 Oct 55 King of Kings theme / El Cid theme'

ORIOLE



CB 1340 Oct 56 'Song for a summer night /  
The surrey with the  
fringe on top'  
CB 1344 Dec 56 'Falling star / Autumn concerto'

## CONQUEST

CP 107 Apl 57 (with Lord Adrian Foley piano)  
'Sentimental /  
evening'  
M.G.M.  
(Cyril Ornadel Starlight Symphony  
Orch)  
MGM1054 Feb 60 'June is bustin` out all over /  
Flower Drum  
Song selection'  
MGM1073 May 60 'Begin the beguine / I love Paris :  
Allez-vous :  
It`s alright'  
MGM1090 Aug 60 'Song without end / Portrait of  
my love'  
MGM1141 Nov 61 'Theme from King of Kings /  
Theme from  
El Cid'  
ORIOLE  
CBS 4014 69 'Ann Veronica / They can`t keep  
us down  
anymore'  
PYE  
7N45565 Jan 76 'Brief encounter / Conflict'

## Tony OSBORNE

Born Edward Benjamin Osborne, near Cambridge in June 1922, as a lad he learnt piano and accordion, on which he became East Anglian champion at the age of 13. By the late thirties, while working in a music shop, he was playing part time with local dance bands.

During wartime service in the Middle East, where he was a member of the Air Force Command Orchestra, Tony decided there were too many piano players around and took up the trumpet, working hard to perfect his technique. After demob he played in several West End club and hotel bands, including Carroll Gibbons, Ambrose, Don Carlos, Ramon Lopez and Santiago, the choice of the latter three indicating his soft spot for Latin American music. He also did some arranging for Edmundo Ros.

Tony had about a year on tour in the trumpet section of Cyril Stapleton`s Orchestra, leaving in January 1949 (replaced by Syd Lawrence) to return to club work, joining Ambrose at the Nightingale. He already had a wife, Joan, and a young child, so touring didn`t appeal to him. Also by being based in London he was close to the music publishers and recording studios where his arranging talents were put to good use.

In January 1951 Tony joined Chappell`s as a staff arranger and the following year was arranging and leading the backing orchestra on Melodisc recordings, his first session reported as being Dickie Valentine`s early offering on that label. He recorded with artists like Petula Clark and Dorothy Squires on Polygon, and Gary Miller and The Beverley Sisters for Philips.

When Pye Radio entered the record business, by taking over the Nixa and Polygon labels in 1955, Tony was soon taken onboard as arranger-conductor, being very influential in the early output of the new Pye-Nixa label.

In 1957 he left Pye (Peter Knight and Kim Drake took over his musical director role) and joined E.M.I. where one of his first sessions, Gracie Fields` Columbia single 'Around the world', became a Top Ten hit. While backing many of Columbia`s roster of vocal artists, including Marion Ryan, Dennis Lotis and Lee Lawrence, he also worked for H.M.V. where he conducted some sessions for Alma Cogan. Tony`s many instrumental discs were also released on this label.

During the dying days of BBC TV`s 'Six Five Special', Tony was recruited to lead The Brass Hats, a line up of four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, bass, guitar and drums and he later led a similar outfit on ITV`s 'On The Air' series.

Also something of a composer, Tony wrote the original signature tune for 'Juke Box Jury'. Titled 'Juke box fury', he recorded it on H.M.V as Ozzie Warlock and the Wizards. His 'Secrets of the Seine' received the Ivor Novello "Best Light Orchestra Composition" award in 1962.

Still hooked on the L.A. sound, he recorded several albums in the idiom, including 'The Latin Touch' and 'Cha Cha with Tony'. On his H.M.V. single 'I want to be happy cha cha', the laughing in the gaps was supplied by none other than funster Des O`Connor. Even when not in the L.A style, his recordings still often had a continental flavour.

By the 1980`s Tony was dividing his time between working on cruise liners and touring the southern continent. His first marriage, that produced two children, having broken up he met and married an Australian girl, settling down in Sydney. In later years he was still playing piano professionally in local bars and restaurants. Tony died on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009 aged 86.

Tony Osborne Recordings  
(when not backing vocalists)

## POLYGON

P 1158 Apl 55 'Stranger in paradise /  
Baubles, bangles  
and beads'  
CONQUEST  
CP 102 Jan 57 (with Sabrina) 'I want a man, not a  
mouse /  
Persuade me'  
PYE NIXA  
N 15097 Oct 57 'Jumpin` the groove / The scamp'  
H.M.V.  
POP 439 Jan 58 (T.O Dancing Strings) 'The lights of  
Lisbon /  
The lovely ladies  
of Milano'  
POP 483 May 58 'The man from Marseilles /  
The secret of  
happiness'  
POP 514 Aug 58 'Take me dreaming / Disc-donc disc-  
donc'  
POP 554 Nov 58 'I want to be happy cha cha /  
Marrakesh'

~~~~~P  
~~~~~

## Larry PAGE

Another of the late fifties rock 'n' roll singers who was here today and gone tomorrow, Larry arrived on the record scene with his 1957 cover of Sal Mineo's gentle rocker 'Start Movin''. It's quite likely that Larry helped in the production of his own record, for at the time, known as Larry Davis, he was a packer at E.M.I's Hayes factory. Unfortunately it was Terry Dene that joined Sal on the chart. With four versions of the song available on record, the one I've not yet mentioned was by the most unlikely 'rocker' Donald Peers.

A long time singer with local amateur groups, 20 year old Larry's big break came when he sang on a Dickie Valentine Fan Club get-together at the Royal Albert Hall, on Easter Sunday. After the release of his record he appeared in variety with his Page Boys. Whatever they lacked in musical quality, they compensated for by their smart turn out, all in black except Larry who had a wine coloured jacket. Billed as "Larry Page - The New Teenage Rage" they appeared in 'Teenage Sensations of 1957' at London's Metropolitan Theatre from 16<sup>th</sup> September.

By now his second record (another cover - this time of The Crickets' 'That'll be the day') was in the shops. Doing little better than the first Larry knew that to succeed he needed to draw attention to himself, and this he did by publicly proposing to one of his screaming girl fans, 17 year old Ann Ward a London clerk. This was on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1958, and they had only met the previous day on a 'Six Five Special' show. Most of Monday mornings papers carried the story, and obviously not one to let good publicity grow cold, the happy couple were married just a month later.

By September, and still not top of the pops, another approach (and another gimmick) was needed, so the Page Boys became The Front Page Men and Larry died his hair blue (well it worked for Wee Willie Harris, didn't it?). Nothing happened and so early 1959 he went off on a tour of Europe, better to frighten the population over there than over here! Also in 1959 Larry recorded six titles for Saga Records, backed by a John Barry led group.

By 1961 Larry had given up and was managing a dance hall in Newport, Monmouthshire, a job he turned into a successful business, later adding record production. Sort of back where he started really!

During the late sixties and seventies there were several records issued by the Larry Page Orchestra and considering the previous paragraph, it's quite possible this was the same Larry Page.

Larry Page Recordings  
COLUMBIA

DB 3965 Jun 57 'Start movin' / Cool shake'  
DB 4012 Oct 57 'That'll be the day / Please don't  
blame me'  
DB 4080 Mar 58 'Under control / This is my life'

SAGA

SAG 45-290259 'Big blon' baby / I vibrate'  
SAG 45-290359 'Throw all your lovin' my way /

How'm I doing,

hey, hey'

SAG 45-290459 'Little old fashioned love / Marilyn'

## Lisa PAGE

Elizabeth Page, a dark haired good looking, had already won several beauty contests and done some bit-part film work by the late fifties, when she followed big sister Jill Day onto the stage. During 1958 nineteen year old Lisa was to be found vocalising in cabaret at clubs like London's Blue Angel, before up-and-coming leader John Barry signed her to sing with his group in November of that year. Early in 1960 she was appearing on the BBC's new jazz series 'Tempo 60' with the resident Tubby Hayes Group.

As far as I'm aware Lisa never did make any records, but she was still performing and making regular appearances on television well into the sixties.

## Norrie PARAMOR

Norrie, born in London 15<sup>th</sup> May 1914, took piano lessons from the age of seven and by the time he was fifteen, while working as an office boy, lead his own trio at a Cliftonville Hotel. From there he went on to arrange and play full time in the bands of Jack Harris and Maurice Winnick.

In 1940 he joined the R.A.F. and during wartime played in many service bands, ending up as musical director of the Ralph Reader Gang Shows. Following demob Norrie joined tenor saxist Harry Gold who was forming his Pieces of Eight, a group that also included Geoff Love on trombone. The Eight made several recordings for the Parlophone and Decca labels. By 1949 Norrie had left as a playing member, to concentrate on his freelance arranging activities, the constant touring keeping him away from London where most of that work was, although he did continue as manager and booking agent for the Pieces of Eight.

It was not long before Norrie's itchy fingers got the better of him and he formed a small Dixiland group, working the local clubs. This outfit made some records for Columbia, beginning what was to be a long association with E.M.I. Norrie had been introduced to the Columbia people when working on some arrangements for singer Marie Benson, who he'd already backed on the Oriole label. Initially the company only considered him as a ragtime-jazz performer and it wasn't until his arrangement of Teddy Johnson's 'Beloved be faithful' became popular, that they let him record anything else. He continued to prove his point by coming up with many unusual instrument combinations to enhance the backing of solo artists. During the fifties and sixties he produced over two dozen No.1 hits.

Throughout the fifties Norrie was musical director of many Radio Luxembourg shows recorded in London, one of the first being in 1951 with Teddy Johnson on 'Empire Song Time' sponsored by Empire Football Pools. He also led the orchestra on Tommy Trinder's 'You Lucky People', a Luxembourg series where members of the audience were invited to beat the band by naming a tune they couldn't play. Norrie also

backed trumpet player Eddie Calvert on his 'Calvert Cavalcade' shows.

When Norman Newell left Columbia Records in 1952 to join the new Philips label, his job as Artists & Repertoire Manager was filled by the joint team of Ray Martin and Norrie Paramor.

As well being responsible for the arranging and music supervision duties at Columbia where he helped guide the careers of artists including Teddy Johnson, Ruby Murray, Michael Holliday, Cliff Richard and Frank Ifield, Norrie also formed and led the very successful Big Ben Banjo Band that made numerous recordings right through into the seventies.

Of all the recordings he made in his own name, just two made it onto a record chart, both being themes. The first came in March 1960 and was the Theme from the film 'A Summer Place' that charted at No.36, and the other was from the T.V. series 'Z Cars' that did a little better reaching No.33. Both these listings are from the chart in 'Music Week' the music trade weekly. The New Musical Express chart, normally used through the fifties, only listed the top thirty songs at that time.

In November 1962 the satirical TV show 'That Was The Week That Was' made a scathing attack on Norrie, when it suggested he used several of his own 'mediocre' compositions as the 'B' side of pop hits he produced for Columbia, thereby directing cash into his own pocket. During the following week comments in the press agreed there was some truth in what was transmitted, but said the accusation didn't only apply to Norrie, and at least he didn't hide behind a nom-de-plume. Norrie himself said he didn't see the programme - he was on radio's 'Everybody Step' with the Big Ben Banjo Band at the time - but had nothing to hide. On the question of song-writing pseudonyms, a letter in 'In Tune' magazine No.70 suggested Norrie used over fifty.

During the sixties Norrie did much freelance work, through his own production company; he was musical director when Judy Garland appeared at the London Palladium in 1960 and was M.D of the Palladium pantomimes, 'Babes In The Wood' in December 1965 and 'Cinderella' a year later. He finally left E.M.I. in 1968 and continued to freelance for a time, before being appointed conductor of the BBC Midland Radio Orchestra in 1973. Norrie died on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1979.

#### Norrie Paramor Recordings

COLUMBIA	(Norrie Paramor Orchestra, except where shown)
DB 2821 Mar 51	(Norrie Paramor Dixilanders) 'Saloon bar rag / A-razz-a-ma-taz'
DB 2879 Jun 51	(Norrie Paramor Nitelites) 'All the world is coming to London / Festival hop'
DB 2898 Aug 51	(Norrie Paramor Ragmen) 'Ivory rag / The black note serenade'
DB 2981 Dec 51	'Wedding of the painted doll / Banjo

rag'	
DB 3007 Feb 52	'Turn back the hands of time / At last at last'
DB 3061 Apr 52	'The greatest show on earth / The Malloy's ride again' (both v Johnny Brandon)
DB 3128 Aug 52	'Isle of Innisfree / Killarney'
DB 3136 Aug 52	'Melody / Always'
DB 3176 Nov 52	'Memories of Scotland medley'
DB 3193 Nov 52	'Cotton reel / Plink plank plonk'
DB 3233 Feb 53	'Fandango / Penny-whistle song'
DB 3281 May 53	'Song from Moulin Rouge / April in Portugal'
DB 3313 Jly 53	'Cabaret Time in Paris medley : La Seine / La ronde de l'amour / Pigalle / La vie en rose / Autumn leaves / C'est si bon'
DB 3336 Sep 53	'The Melba waltz / Melodia'
DB 3387 Nov 53	(Norrie Paramor Novelty orchestra) 'The Man Between theme / Callaghan's monkey'
DB 3413 Jan 54	'My first romance / Mon pays'
DB 3443 Feb 54	'The Luxemburg polka / Wedding day'
DB 3492 Jun 54	'Johnny guitar / Paramambo'
DB 3515 Sep 54	'The high and the mighty / Rip Van Twinkle'
DB 3552 Dec 54	'Majorca / Gina'
DB 3600 Apr 55	'Selection from Kismet'
DB 3611 Apr 55	'Selection from Kismet No.2'
DB 3697 Dec 55	'Autumn leaves / New baby'
DB 3745 Mar 56	'The poor people of Paris / The Threepenny Opera theme'
DB 3780 May 56	(Norrie Paramor and his Other Orchestra) 'Ask for Joe / Charleston Parisien'
DB 3815 Sep 56	'Autumn concerto / Lullaby of Birdland'
DB 3870 Dec 56	'Anastasia / Magic banjo'
DB 3943 May 57	'Taurus tango / Blue Indian summer'
DB 3943 Jly 57	'The Spring song / Mandolin serenade'
DB 4004 Sep 57	'Silly Billy / Tell my love'
DB 4119 May 58	(Norrie Paramor Concert Orchestra) 'I could have danced all night / With a little bit of luck'
DB 4196 Oct 58	'Come Prima / My heart in Portugal'
DB 4229 Dec 58	(Norrie Paramor Concert Orchestra) 'Marianina / Enchanted April'
DB 4328 Jun 59	(Norrie Paramor Concert Orchestra) 'Once upon a dream / I wonder'
DB 4419 Feb 60	'Theme from a summer place / Half pint'
DB 4474 Jun 60	(with Max Jaffa violin) 'Love is like a violin / Romantica'
DB 4639 61	'Spanish Harlem / Hawaii'
DB 4789 62	'Theme from Z Cars / Theme from A Ballad of a Soldier'
DB 7114 63	(Norrie Paramor Strings) 'Dream of tomorrow / Laramie'
DB 7298 64	'The grasshopper / Boeing'

DB 7446 65 'Dance of the warriors / Dragon dance'  
 DB 8430 68 'Soul coaxing / Autumn in London Town'

## Eddie PARKER

Eddie, who twice had a taste of showbiz fame, but both times only briefly, was really Raymond Walker from Watford north London. Born 7<sup>th</sup> February 1933, as a fifteen year old Sea Scout he was chosen to appear on Wilfred Pickles 'Have a Go' series broadcast from Watford Gaumont Cinema, where his singing made such an impact with the audience Wilfred invited him to join his touring show. This lasted about two years until about 1950 when his voice broke and his brief taste of fame came to an end.

Now hooked on the idea of a show-business career he enrolled for a drama course at the Central School of Art, that lasted until he was called up for National Service in the R.A.F. During his two years in the service Eddie was in big demand for camp concerts.

Back in Civvy Street and now using the name Ray Miller he secured some minor dance band vocalist work. He had seasons with the Derek Sinclair Band at Nottingham's Astoria and Eric Lawe at the Morecambe Winter Gardens, but decided he was getting nowhere and returned to a day job in Watford

Employed as a laboratory assistant by a petroleum company, Eddie continued to exercise the tonsils part-time, whenever the chance came along. Taking mainly small club and dance hall bookings he finally got a 'Midday Music Hall' broadcast on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1954 and directly as a result of this he was given a test by Columbia Records. With his light gimmick-less baritone style getting the thumbs up his first disc, coupling 'Wait 'till April' with 'Open your heart', was out the following January.

By March, with his second record in the shops, Eddie Parker (as Columbia had named him) was persuaded by another Eddie, trumpeter Eddie Calvert, to give up the lab job (he was now singing evenings at Wimbledon Palais) and join 'Calvert's Cavalcade' touring the variety circuit. So on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 1955 Eddie opened for his first week in variety at Newcastle Empire, followed by subsequent weeks at Edinburgh, Manchester, Hull, Sunderland, Derby, Brighton, Sheffield and Leeds.

No doubt an exciting few months for Eddie, and no better way of topping it was his June 27<sup>th</sup> wedding to home town sweetheart Margaret Bonnor, a Civil Service secretary. But the show must go on, and a week later he was back on the road at Great Yarmouth Regal. So followed a further year on the Calvert Road-Show, until late 1956 when a health problem was finally diagnosed as tuberculosis and Eddie was admitted to Shrodells, a TB sanatorium in Watford. At the time Margaret was expecting their first child, and Eddie wasn't allowed to come into contact with the baby until he left hospital.

In July 1957, now back at home, Eddie reported he was unlikely to return to his previous career and expected to take a Disabled Persons Resettlement Programme. I'm not aware if he

did return, and can only assume the Eddie Parker who appears on one side of a 1979 Grapevine single is a different guy, although I am informed there is currently a ballad and country & western singer on German TV by the name of Eddie Parker, who would be about the right age.

### Eddie Parker Recordings

COLUMBIA (*with Norrie Paramor orch*)

DB 3561 Jan 55 'Open your heart / Wait 'till April'  
 DB 3587 Mar 55 'Six bridges to cross /

That's all I want

from you'

DB 3629 Jun 55 'Engagement waltz / Good luck to the bride'

DB 3699 Dec 55 'Bella notte / Far away from everybody'

DB 3804 Sep 56 'Love me as though there were no tomorrow /

Rich

in love'

## Eula PARKER

Eula, a strawberry blonde vocalist from Australia, had been one of the Parker Sisters, a well known radio act. When the trio broke up, because the other two got married, Eula decided to come to England.

Arriving during the Spring of 1955, twenty-six year old Eula had an early broadcast on 'Whit Monday Music Hall', starring Dickie Valentine, on 30<sup>th</sup> May. She soon had a regular Sunday evening Radio Luxembourg spot with the Tommy Whittle Band and in September her big break came when she replaced fellow Aussie Marie Benson in The Stargazers vocal group.

But only a year later she left The Stargazers, as she said it prevented her developing a solo career; June Marlow took her place. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 1956 Eula made her solo break, on Henry Hall's 'Guest Night', but even then she sang a duet with Dick Bentley. She was seen on ITV's 'Music Shop' and in November began what was to become a long association with the television show 'Lunch Box'. Within a few months Eula was appearing daily on this lunch-time show and, except for a few trips back home, continued to appear regularly into the sixties. On one visit back to Australia, in December 1957, she had a six week booking to appear on the nightly 'In Melbourne Tonight' TV show.

Eula wrote the song 'The village of St. Bernadette' but doesn't appear to have recorded it and her only solo disc seems to be her Oriole recording of 'Hedgehopper', the 'Lunch Box' theme, although she did provide the vocal input to a 1955 Frank Weir Decca side. 'The village of St. Bernadette' won an Ivor Novello award and was put on disc by Anne Shelton who had a minor hit with it in late 1959, while Andy Williams took it to No.7 in America.

### Eula Parker Recordings

DECCA

F 10646 Nov 55 (*with Frank Weir Orch*) 'I'm a little echo'

ORIOLE

CB 1411 Dec 57 'Hedgehopper / Silhouettes'

## Jimmy PARKINSON

Jimmy, an Australian, started in show business as a 15 year old callboy at a Sydney Theatre. Soon his musical vocal talents were noticed and it wasn't long before he was singing with local dance bands, moving on to night clubs, radio and records. In fact he became quite a big name "down under" and when in 1955, now a 24 year old, he decided to prove himself by coming to England, he had already notched up over 2,000 broadcasts and quite a stack of records. Arriving in London with his new bride Faye, a former model, a demo disc that he had previously sent to Columbia Records opened the door to a recording career over here. His first Columbia disc, which coupled 'All at once' with 'I look at you', was in the shops by November, but it didn't make any great strides with the British public. But his second, 'The great pretender' that took him to No.9 on the New Musical Express sales chart, was only just behind The Platters version. During 1956 Jimmy had further chart success with 'Walk hand in hand' and 'In the middle of the house', while his singing voice was heard over the credits of the Belinda Lee film 'The Secret Place'.

He broadcast with the BBC Show Band, appeared on several TV shows and toured variety theatres in the 'Top Twenty Show' that also featured Michael Holliday, Marie Benson, Robert Earl, The King Brothers and Kitzka Kazakos.

In July 1957 having all the proof he needed, by now his Columbia LP 'Solo' was out in America on the Capitol label, Jimmy decided it was time to go home. At the time of writing, in the mid-nineties, Jimmy, well into his sixties, was still playing club dates down in his homeland.

### Jimmy Parkinson Recordings

COLUMBIA (*acc by Ray Martin orch unless shown*)

DB 3702 Nov 55	'All at once / When I look at you'
DB 3729 Feb 56	The great pretender / Hand in hand'
DB 3755 Apl 56	'You can't be true to two / Those you have loved'
DB 3775 Jun 56	'Walk hand in hand / Cry baby'
DB 3808 Sep 56	'A lovers' quarrel / Gina'
DB 3833 Nov 56	'In the middle of the house / You to me'
DB 3876 Feb 57	'But you / Together' ( <i>acc by Eric Jupp orch</i> )
DB 3912 Mar 57	'Whatever Lola wants / Round and round'

## Jack PARNELL

Born into a great show-business family Jack just had to succeed, and so he did too, quite spectacularly. His father Russ Carr (Frederick Parnell) and his mother Olive Grey toured a ventriloquist act around the halls; his grandfather Thomas Parnell was better known as Fred Russell - the daddy of all vent acts; and his uncle Val Parnell became boss of The London Palladium.

Born on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1923, young Jack was sent to Wycliffe Boarding School in Clevedon, Somerset at an early age. He moved on to grammar school

in Brighton and then a business studies course. During his school years he was taught classical piano, but his preference for tympani became evident whenever he got the opportunity. This resulted in him receiving a drum kit one Christmas.

It was hoped Jack would follow a career in the medical profession, but instead he went to work in an agents' office and took drum lessons from Max Abrams, drummer with many top bands including Jack Hylton, Jay Wilbur, Syd Lipton and Carroll Gibbons. It was Max who got him a season with a concert party at Scarborough, but this came to an end with the outbreak of war and Jack then played in the Sammy Ash Band at the Rex Ballroom Cambridge, until he joined the RAF in 1941.

His posting to Bomber Command H.Q. at High Wycombe brought him into contact with jazzman Vic Lewis. Both became members of the Buddy Featherstonhaugh Band that flourished on the station, and a mutual interest led them to form the Vic Lewis - Jack Parnell Jazzmen. In February 1944 the Jazzmen were given a recording session by Parlophone and put their first four sides on to disc, although Jack had already been the drummer on some Radio Rhythm Club Sextet H.M.V singles, the first being in July 1943. He also sat in on some of Skyrockets sides during 1944-45

It was as featured drummer with the Radio Rhythm Sextet, directed by Buddy Featherstonhaugh, that Jack became well known. First airing on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1943, he made ten similar broadcasts before his last in April 1944. By that time, by virtue of the radio series and the Rhythm Club's recording of 'Big noise from Winnekta', Jack had become a national drum star. The band also featured on the bill of the famous 'Jazz Jamboree' on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1943. At the following year's 'Jamboree' held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1944 Jack sat in the drum chair of both Ted Heath's Music and the Lewis-Parnell Jazzmen. This was the historic concert that featured the American Band of the A.E.F directed by Glenn Miller.

Still a serviceman (all the previous recording had been with Air Ministry permission) on demob in 1946 Jack joined the new Ted Heath Orchestra (he began recording with Ted in 1944), where he formed his own Quartet within the band. Initially comprising Jack on drums with Reg Owen clarinet, Ralph Sharon piano, Dave Goldberg guitar and Charlie Short bass, the quartet made several records on the Decca label. On the same label Jack occasionally left the drum stool to provide a vocal chorus on some Ted Heath sides. In 1947 Jack and his Quartet were voted Top Small Combo in the Melody Maker readers poll (Tito Burns came 2<sup>nd</sup> and Harry Gold 3<sup>rd</sup>). Jack himself had been constantly voted Top Drummer since the poll began in 1944 and continued to be so into the fifties.

Already keen to form his own band Jack was rehearsing a ten piece that included Kenny Baker, Ronnie Scott and Johnny Dankworth for a West End club contract in November 1948, but it all fell through when Ronnie Scott was struck down with a mild bout of scarlet fever. So it wasn't until April 1951 that he finally made the break from Heath (Ronnie Verrell moved in from the

Cyril Stapleton Orchestra) forming a 14 piece for the Tommy Trinder - Pat Kirkwood West End show 'Fancy Free' that, following two weeks warm up at the Birmingham Hippodrome, opened at the Prince of Wales Theatre on 15<sup>th</sup> May. The band, which included such great names as Dave Shand, Don Lusher and Ronnie Scott, got their first broadcast on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September, and provided the music for the Pat Kirkwood and Jack Watling film 'Once A Sinner'. 1951 brought another great joy for Jack, when his wife Monique, a French girl he married in May 1950, gave birth to their son during August. When the Prince of Wales run came to an end Jack took his band on a tour of dance halls, starting off on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 1952 at Wimbledon Palais. Now known as Jack Parnell and his Music Makers, they made several more broadcasts and during July accompanied Lena Horne on her short U.K. tour, followed by two weeks with her in Scandanavia during August. While on the Continent, the band is reported as having recorded five titles for the Swedish Modern Music label (The champ / Prince Albert / Once in a while / These foolish things / Nice work if you can get it).

Early 1952 Jack had used Maurice Allen and Lorna Haven (a young lady with a "sweet" straight style, much in contrast with the bands blast) as vocalists. In December singer Marion Davis and her husband sax player Ronnie Keene joined the band. During 1952 Jack had been voted Musician of the Year by Melody Maker readers. Keeping up a hectic round of one night stands and dance hall work that included two weeks at Blackpool Empress Ballroom during August 1953, The Melody Makers were certainly a busy outfit. Back on Parlophone they recorded several popular band numbers.

Early in 1954 Jack reformed the band, added new singers and even dancers, all for a new concept stage production 'Jazz Wagon'. The show kicked off with a week at Chiswick Empire from 22<sup>nd</sup> February and then toured the country, but despite the talents of singers like Annie Ross, Dennis Hale, Marion Davis and Mike McKenzie, plus the undoubted quality and drive of the band, the show wasn't a great success. Variety audiences were, generally, not too keen on jazz, even when it was delivered in as fancy a package as this. The experiment ended with a week at Coventry in May.

Back on the dance hall circuit, the band headed for Scotland and after a short tour spent two weeks at Green's Playhouse Ballroom, Glasgow. By August they were back at the Empress Ballroom, Blackpool for four weeks. In November they appeared on the Royal Variety Show at the London Palladium, in a 'Record Rendezvous' feature. Current vocalists were Dennis Hale and Irene Miller.

In March 1955 they all went off to South Africa, supporting Eve Boswell on a 'Variety Fanfare' tour. Back in Britain the end of May, the band began a tour of Mecca ballrooms, starting at The Ritz, Manchester. 1955 was also the year Jack lost his 'Top Drummer' crown, to Ronnie Verrell, who replaced him in the Ted Heath Band, with Eric Delaney coming second, pushing Jack down into third place.

Having already made the occasional television

appearance, in 1956 Jack became very involved with that medium. With the arrival of commercial television in September 1955 there became new openings for support orchestras and, with several relatives in the business, Jack was a natural to fill one of these slots. Joining ATV as musical director, he was soon responsible for supplying the musical content for shows like 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium', 'Young and Foolish', 'Startime', 'Saturday Spectacular' 'The Arthur Haynes Show' and a small group known as The Counter Hands for 'Music Shop'. There was even 'The Jack Parnell Show'.

Jack still managed to get out on the road, he backed Pat Boone on his 10 day UK tour that began Boxing Day 1956, and toured with The Platters three months later. His band played summer seasons at Blackpool throughout most of the fifties and also did four weeks on the Isle of Man in 1956, sharing duties at the Villa Marina with Ivy Benson's all girl band.

Jack was M.D at ATV for about 20 years, a job that demanded most of his time. In that role he wrote the signature tune for several shows including 'The Muppets', 'The Golden Shot' and 'Family Fortunes'.

From the mid-seventies he was able to spend more time actually playing and filled the drum stool in several combinations, including a Ted Heath tribute bands. He was often sought out for support by visiting American musicians, an indication of the esteem to which he is held in the profession. Jack continued to appear in concerts with old friends Kenny Baker and Don Lusher in the band Best of British and in June 1997 was conducting Laurie Johnson's London Big Band on its first public outing at the Barbican and again at the London Palladium in October. Having battled cancer for some time, Jack died on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2010 just two days after his 87<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### Jack Parnell Recordings

PARLOPHONE		(Vic Lewis - Jack Parnell Jazzmen)	
R 2933	Apl 44	'Johnny's idea / Mean old bed-bug blues	(v. Vic Lewis)
R 2939	Jun 44	'Jazz band jump / I'm coming Virginia'	
R 2944	Aug 44	'Jazz men blues / Ja da (v. Vic Lewis)'	
R 2949	Oct 44	'Why begin again / Sugar'	
R 2953	Dec 44	'Is you is or is you ain't my baby (v. Vic Lewis)	
		plenty'	/ That's a
R 2960	Feb 45	'Ugly child (v. Vic Lewis) / Indiana'	
R 2965	Apl 45	'Get happy / Someday sweetheart'	
R 2975	Aug 45	'Singin' the blues / Prince of wails'	
R 2986	Dec 45	'Dippermouth blues / Ballin' the jack'	

#### DECCA (Jack Parnell and his Quartet - unless stated)

F 8607	May 46	'Just you, just me / Soft Noodles'	
F 8661	Sep 46	(v. with Ted Heath Music) 'My heart goes crazy'	
F 8662	Sep 46	'Can't we be friends / Stompin' at the Savoy'	
F 8690	Oct 46	'On the Alamo / I'll never be the same'	
F 8758	Apl 47	'On the sunny side of the street / Scrubber time'	

(no drums - JP)

*plays vibes)*  
 F 8767 Apl 47 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Them that has - gets'  
 F 8795 Sep 47 " " " 'Route 66'  
 F 8798 Sep 47 'Sweet Lorraine (v. JP) / Old man re-bop'  
 F 8814 Nov 47 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Dickory Dock'  
 F 9104 Apl 49 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Old Mother Hubbard  
 / Tequila'  
 F 9167 Jly 49 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Dry Bones (plus The Kordites) / Smoothy (plus Lydia McDonald)'  
 F 9186 Jly 49 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Get out of town before sundown'  
 F 9374 Mar 50 'Jukebox jumba / Quickie' (both JP tunes and used on sound-track of film The Blue Lamp)  
 F 9381 Apl 50 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Didn't we (plus Lita Roza)'  
 F 9422 Jun 50 (v. with Ted Heath Music) 'Beautiful lovable / Go to sleep (plus Lita Roza)'  
 TECHNIDISC  
 TD 108 pre 51 'Elementary side drum technique'  
 PARLOPHONE  
 R 3435 Oct 51 (JP Rhythm) 'The white suit samba / Go, go, go, go (v. on both JP)'  
 R 3607 Dec 52 (JP Band) 'The champ / Summertime'  
 R 3638 Feb 53 " 'Waltzing the blues (v. JP) / Catherine wheel'  
 ESQUIRE (leading the 1953 Melody Maker All Star (poll winners) Band)  
 10-283 Mar 53 'Ballot box / Coronation jump' (both Parnell compositions)  
 PARLOPHONE (JP and his Music Makers)  
 R 3682 May 53 'Night train / The Hawk talks'  
 R 3710 Jly 53 'Carioca / Topaz'  
 R 3733 Sep 53 'April in Paris / Cottontail'  
 R 3773 Nov 53 'Dragnet / Fuller bounce'  
 R 3802 Jan 54 'The creep (v. The Sapphires) / Route 66 (v. JP & S)'  
 (Jack Parnell Orchestra)  
 R 3821 Feb 54 'Skin deep / Devil's eyes (v. Dennis Hale)'  
 R 3852 Apl 54 Blowin' wild (v. Dennis Hale) / Knock out'  
 R 3870 Jun 54 'The bandit (v. Dennis Hale) / Annie's blues (v. Annie Ross)'  
 R 3904 Sep 54 'Sure thing / Kick off'  
 R 3944 Nov 54 'Sky blue shirt and a rainbow tie / Trip to Mars'  
 R 3986 Mar 55 'Shake, rattle and roll / Fanfare boogie'  
 R 3994 Feb 55 (with Eve Boswell) 'Ready willing and able / Pam-poo-dey'  
 R 4000 Mar 55 (with Eve Boswell) 'The heart you break /

Tika tika tok'  
 R 4009 Apl 55 'The fish / Ting-a-ling (both v. The Crackerjacks)'  
 R 4083 Nov 55 'When the saints go marching in / Twilight in Turkey'  
 R 4127 Jan 56 'Sugarfoot stomp / East meets West'  
 R 4134 Feb 56 'Love and marriage / Sixteen tons'  
 R 4183 Jun 56 'When Yuba plays the rumba on the tuba / Lucky thirteen'  
 R 4500 Nov 58 'Topsy / Cha cha rock'  
 H.M.V.  
 POP 630 May 59 'Kansas City (v. JP) / The golden striker'  
 PHILIPS  
 PB 1005 Mar 60 '77 Sunset Strip / Teen ride'  
 DECCA  
 F 11958 Aug 64 'The kiss (theme of ATV series Love Story) / The Hidden Truth theme'  
 BRADLEY  
 BRAD7420 74 'Razor's edge / Spy glass'  
 E.M.I.  
 EM12480 76 'Gotham City Municipal Swing Band / The kiss'

## Harry PARRY

Harry is probably best remembered for his Radio Rhythm Club Sextet that broadcast extensively during the war years. Born at Bangor, North Wales in January 1912, eldest of five children in the Parry family, he was playing tenor horn, flugelhorn and cornet in brass bands by the time he was ten. Beginning work as an apprentice instrument maker in Bangor University science department, he spent his spare time playing violin with the local Marina Dance Band. A completely self taught musician, Harry then took up saxophone and within three months was playing it in public. His fondness for 'hot' solos soon brought him into conflict with other members of the band and he left, making the decision to take up music full time. So in 1932 he joined Eddie Shaw's Band at nearby Llandudno, where he added singing to his alto-sax playing. Before long he'd moved to London where he played in several bands including those of Percival Mackey, Charles Shadwell and Phil Cardew. Now specialising in 'rhythm style' clarinet, Harry led his own band at the Coconut Grove and, from Whit Monday 1940, the St. Regis Hotel in Mayfair (where his pianist was George Shearing). After the St. Regis Hotel was bombed Harry had spells back at the Coconut Grove, Paradise Club and Potomac Restaurant. While resident at the St. Regis he had broadcast on 'Radio Rhythm Club', a Forces Service programme produced by Charles Chilton and the



first BBC series to present 'swing' music on a regular basis. As the show became more established Chilton decided it would be a good idea to have a resident group, and invited Harry to form what was to become the famous Radio Rhythm Club Sextet, making its first broadcast on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 1940.

Personnel were Harry on clarinet leading George Shearing piano, Joe Deniz guitar, Tommy Bromley bass, Ben Edwards drums and Roy Marsh vibraphone, and they made their first record, 'I've found a new baby' on Parlophone's Super Rhythm Series in March 1941. Throughout the forties the Sextet continued to make regular visits to the recording studio. In February 1941 Harry took over as producer of 'Radio Rhythm Club' when Chilton joined the forces, continuing in the role for two years.

In the 1944 'Melody Maker' readers poll the Sextet was voted Top Small Combination, with Harry second place on clarinet to Carl Barriteau. Having been exempt from military service due to poor health Harry did war work in an engine factory. When the war ended he was playing his third season at the Potomac Restaurant and remained there until July 1947, before moving to the London Casino where the vocalist was Paula Green. Although, the singer most associated with Harry is Dinah Kaye, who appeared with him on and off all through the forties. In December 1947, having just recovered from an appendicitis operation, Harry took the Sextet on tour, initially playing cine-variety around the Granada circuit. They then toured Holland and entertained servicemen out in the Middle East. From March 1947 Harry hosted a new BBC radio series, 'Jazz Club', that continued to feature the Sextet. Harry was an accomplished programme presenter with a keen sense of humour; in 1951 he even appeared on television's 'Music Hall', not playing but as compere.

During the early fifties the Sextet were resident at Max Josephs' Washington Hotel in Curzon Street and at the Albany Club. Almost all of 1953 was spent on a tour of India, playing top hotels in New Delhi and Calcutta. Another new venture came in 1954 with a summer season at Weymouth Pier. Harry augmented the band to a ten piece plus vocalist Tessa Sims. Harry's band was at Butlin's Filey Holiday Camp for the following two summers. Other than these holiday season bookings Harry now did little touring and filled much of the year as a radio record presenter.

Not long back from a season at Filey holiday camp, on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1956, aged only 44, he suffered a fatal heart attack and was cremated a week later at Golders Green Cemetery.

#### Harry Parry Recordings

##### PARLOPHONE (Radio Rhythm Club Sextet)

R 2786 Mar 41 'I've found a new baby / Black eyes'  
R 2789 Apr 41 'Softly as in a morning sunrise / Boogie'  
R 2793 Jun 41 'Dim blues / Parry opus'  
R 2804 Aug 41 'I'm young and healthy / It don't count'  
R 2808 Sep 41 'Bounce me brother with a solid four / Don't  
be that way (both v. Doreen

Villiers)'

R 2817 Nov 41 'Honeysuckle rose / Champagne'  
R 2822 Dec 41 'Oceans and notions (H P Trio) / The

Java joint'

R 2826 Jan 42 'I may be wrong / Melancholy baby (both v. Doreen

Villiers)'

R 2832 Feb 42 'Blues for eight / Thrust and Parry'  
R 2834 Mar 42 'The Sheik of Araby / Someday  
sweetheart

(v.

Benny Lee)'

R 2840 May 42 'Basin Street ball (v. Doreen Villiers & Benny  
Lee) / Blue

prelude (v. B L)'

R 2842 Jun 42 'Sweet Georgia Brown / Doggin' around'

R 2844 Jly 42 'Crazy rhythm (v. Benny Lee) / Angry'

R 2846 Aug 42 'My blue heaven / Rose room'

R 2851 Sep 42 'I can't dance (v. Dave Wilkins) / Rock it out'

R 2854 Nov 42 'Potomac jump / Who's sorry now'

R 2857 Dec 42 'Blues around my bed (v. Rita Marlowe) /

Jingle bells'

R 2860 Jan 43 'Ain't misbehavin' / Boogie'

R 2863 Feb 43 'Mr. Five-by-Five (v. Dave Wilkins) / I never knew (v.

Primrose)'

R 2866 Mar 43 'Time on my hands / Lady, be good'

R 2867 Apr 43 'Alexander's ragtime band /

Travellin' blues

(v. Johnny

Green)'

R 2870 May 43 'The darktown strutters ball /

Stardust'

R 2873 Jun 43 'Blue train blues (v. H P) /

You are my

lucky star'

R 2878 Jly 43 'Polly put the kettle on /

Dr. Heckle and

Mr. Jibe'

R 2879 Aug 43 'St. Louis blues (v. Rita Marlowe) / Body

and soul'

R 2882 Sep 43 'A hundred years from today (v. H P) / Tea

for two'

R 2885 Oct 43 'Basin Street blues / Runnin' wild'

R 2889 Nov 43 'Ida, sweet as apple cider / Rosetta'

R 2894 Dec 44 'No gin blues / Hallelujah'

R 2927 Feb 44 'Boogie rides to Yorke (piano solo  
Yorke de

Sousa) /

Blue Lou'

R 2930 Mar 44 'On the sunny side of the street / If I had you'

R 2936 May 44 'South Rampart Street Parade / Moonglow'

R 2942 Jly 44 'Jazz me blues / I surrender dear'

R 2945 Sep 44 'Rocky Mountain blues / Boogie bounce'

R 2950 Dec 44 'Gone with the wind / Parry party'

R 2957 Jan 45 'Don't you know I care (v. Dinah Kaye) /

My favourite dream (v.

Gail Paige)'

R 2962 Jly 45 'Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah (v. H P) /

In a little

Spanish Town'

R 2976 Sep 45 'I'll remember April (v. Dinah Kaye) / One

o'clock jump'

R 2995 Apr 46 'Midnight blue / Plink plonk'

R 3004 Aug 46 'Glen Island special / Was it a dream'

R 3005 Aug 46 'Southpaw special / The shivers'

R 3013 Sep 46 'Okay for baby / Lonesome Road'  
 R 3021 Jan 47 'Bach - bitin' / Blues in C'  
 R 3024 Feb 47 'Indian love call / Frenesi'  
 R 3047 Jly 47 'After you've gone / Liza'  
 R 3057 Sep 47 'She's funny that way (v. HP) / China boy'  
 R 3064 Oct 47 'Exactly like you / Ain't she sweet'  
 R 3091 Feb 48 'Stars fell on Alabama (v. HP) /

#### Davenport blues'

R 3110 May 48 'I got rhythm / Memories of you'  
 R 3119 Jly 48 'At the jazz band ball / Clarinet blues'  
 R 3166 Jan 49 'Little grey home in the west (v.) /  
 Jazz

#### Club

#### stomp'

R 3187 Apl 49 'Blues are brewin' (v. Dinah Kaye) /  
 (Parry's Ragtimers)

#### That's a plenty'

R 3209 Jly 49 (Parry's Ragtimers) 'I'm a ding dong  
 daddy /

#### Bugle call rag'

R 3230 Oct 49 (HP Octet) 'Night and day / Mood  
 indigo

(both v. Dorothee

#### Baronne')

R 3244 Dec 49 (HP Octet) 'I've got you under my  
 skin (v. DB)  
 / Blue Acara'

H.M.V. (leads an All Star Group, comprising  
 Aubrey Franks ten-sax, Dave Wilkins  
 tpt, Woolf Phillips tmb, Art  
 Thompson pno, Joe Deniz gtr,  
 Bobby Midgley dms and Charlie Short  
 bass, before a live audience - advertised as  
 The First English Public Jam Session)

C 3269 Jan 42 'Honeysuckle rose / I found a new  
 baby'

COLUMBIA (Melody Maker-Columbia Jazz Rally of  
 1947)

DB 2353 Dec 47 (group led by Parry) 'Who's sorry now

(two parts)'

DX 1440 Dec 47 'excerpts from the Rally verbally  
 introduced by

Harry Parry'

## Ottilie PATTERSON

Formerly a Belfast art teacher, Anna Ottilie Patterson became one of the most authentic blues singers to come from this side of the Atlantic. It was while she was at Art College that she first became interested in jazz. Being impressed with the vocals she heard on disc, she decided to try and match them, but says she never tried to imitate Bessie Smith, something she was accused of when she became successful. Born in County Down, Northern Ireland on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1932, she had learned piano as a child. Her Christian name came from her mother, a Latvian, who had a cousin of that name, although even in Latvia Ottilie is uncommon.

Having sung with a couple of bands in Ireland, she still wasn't sure if she was any good or not, so during the school summer holidays in 1954 she came to London and sought out Humphrey Lyttleton (the only big name she knew) at his Jazz Club and asked for advice.

Humphrey didn't hear her sing, but did refer her

to Beryl Bryden, who in turn arranged for Ottilie to meet Chris Barber. He listened and afterwards invited her to join his band. Still not sure, she went back to teaching, but soon made the decision to become a full time singer, joining the Chris Barber Jazz Band in January 1955.

Coming on stage for her first appearance, on a National Jazz Federation concert at the Royal Festival Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> January, the audience must have wondered what this slight, fair-haired lass with an innocent face and a timid manner was going to do. They were soon left in no doubt, as George Melly said in his Melody Maker review "few knew what to expect, but from this prim-looking little figure roared the fierce noble voice of an enormous Negress singing the blues - the question is how can a Northern Ireland art teacher sing the blues so authentically - the answer is she shouldn't be able to, but does".

Two weeks later, on 25<sup>th</sup> January, the police had to control the crowds that turned up for her first concert on home ground, at the Belfast Fiesta Ballroom. The local press heaped praise upon her. By the end of the month, Ottilie said she had learned more in three weeks of live shows than in all her years of listening to records.

Ottilie and Chris Barber were married in 1959 and worked together until the late sixties, when she began doing more solo work. By the early eighties the marriage had broken up, although the couple still occasionally appeared in concert together. Ottilie, who spent her final years in a nursing home at Ayr in Scotland, died 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011 aged 79.

Ottilie Patterson Recordings  
 (with Chris Barber Jazz Band)

#### DECCA

F 10472 Feb 55 'I hate a man like you / Reckless love'  
 F 10621 Oct 55 'Nobody knows you when you're down  
 and out

/ Weeping willow

#### blues'

#### PYE NIXA

N 15109 Nov 57 'I love my baby / Kay-cee rider'  
 NJ 2015 Mar 58 'Jailhouse blues / Beal Street blues'  
 NJ 2025 58 'Trombone cholly / Lawdy, lawdy  
 blues'

#### COLUMBIA

DB 4333 Aug 59 'There'll be a hot time in the old town  
 tonight'

DB 4531 Nov 60 'The mountains of Mourne /  
 Real old

#### mountain dew'

SCD 2156 Sep 61 'Mama he treats your daughter  
 mean'

DB 4760 Dec 61 'I'm crazy 'bout my baby / Blueberry  
 Hill'

DB 4817 62 'When the saints go marching in /  
 Down by the

#### riverside'

DB 4834 Jun 62 'I hate myself / Come on baby'

DB 7140 63 'Jealous heart / Won't be long'

(acc by Ivor Raymonde

#### Group)

DB 7208 64 'Baby please don't go / I feel so good

DB 7297 64 'I shall not be moved / Hello Dolly'

DB 7332 64 'O me, what eyes hath love put in my  
 head /

Tell me, where is fancy

bred'

## Betty PAUL

I have to admit that, initially, I knew nothing at all about Betty, although I do have one of her Nixa 78's. Even now I know very little.

During the forties, as Betty Percheron (I assume that is her real name) she was a soubrette playing in revue and music hall. Towards the end of that decade she had changed her name and become a minor star of musical comedy. In 1947 Betty was appearing in the popular Vivian Ellis - A. P. Herbert show 'Bless the Bride' at London's Adelphi Theatre, alongside Lizbeth Webb, Anona Winn, Georges Guetary and Brian Reece.

Obviously a bit of a comedienne, about the same time she was playing Jon Pertwee's girl friend in the radio comedy series 'Up the Pole', that starred Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss. She stayed with the show until its fourth series in 1952, when Josephine Crombie took over.

In November 1950 Betty teamed up with Brian "PC 49" Reece, playing late night cabaret at the Society Restaurant in Jermyn Street. Their double act that was billed as a "mini revue" was written by, among others, Michael Bentine. Betty was currently appearing in 'The Dish Ran Away with the Spoon' at the Vaudeville theatre. From October 1951 she was in the musical play based on the diaries of Samuel Pepys, 'And So To Bed', at London's New Theatre. She played Pepys' wife, and recordings from the production on HMV included a couple of her songs.

Come May 1955 and Betty was back with Jewel and Warriss in the Home Service series 'Looking for Trouble', and again in 1956.

The latest reference to Betty Paul I can find is in March 1957, when she was in the cast of the London Coliseum production of 'Damn Yankees'.

### Betty Paul Recordings

NIXA

NY 7601 Dec 51 'Domino / My boy' (*acc by Alec Firman orch*)

NY 7602 Jan 52 'When the world was young /  
And love  
was born'

H.M.V. (*both from the show 'And So To Bed'*  
*with New Theatre Orch. con. by*  
*Mantovani*)

B 10177 Jan 52 'Love me little, love me long  
(*with*

*Dudley Jones*)'

B 10178 Jan 52 'The oaths (*with Leslie Henson & Alan Dudley*)'

## Jack PAYNE

A popular bandleader of the thirties, by the fifties Jack had more or less given this up in favour of his role as a presenter of radio shows.

Born John Wesley Vivian Payne on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1899 at Leamington, as a youngster he had an ambition to fly and during the First World War served in the Royal Flying Corps. After that music took over and by 1925 Jack was leading his own band at the Hotel Cecil in The Strand (later replaced by the Shell-Mex building). The same year he made his first record, 'Yes Sir!

that's my baby' on Zonophone, and his first broadcast, on Boxing Day.

In 1928 he formed the first BBC Dance Band broadcasting from Savoy Hill studios, and within a few years his signature tune 'Say it with music' was recognised by just about everyone with a radio set. The band, that was on air almost every day, appeared on the 1930 Royal Variety Performance at the Palladium.

Jack and his band starred in the 1932 film 'Say it with Music', in which he played himself helping the fictitious composer of the title tune regain his memory, that he had lost in a plane crash. One of the original songs, written for the film by Ray Noble, was 'Love is the sweetest thing'.

After four years at the BBC Jack took his band out on the road, touring music halls with a spectacular show. Described as a hard taskmaster, he certainly got the results he wanted and proved what a great showman he was. His tours took him not just round this country, but around the world. Making full use of his organising skills, by the late thirties he had retired from the bandstand, becoming a full time impresario.

The outbreak of war changed all this and Jack led one of the first bands to travel overseas for ENSA, entertaining troops over the 1939 Christmas holiday period. In 1940 he went back to the BBC, leading one of their resident wartime dance bands. He also married pianist Peggy Cochrane (his first marriage to Doris Pengree had ended in divorce).

During the twenties and thirties Jack made many records, often providing his own vocal refrain. In 1945 he returned to the recording studio for the first time in almost five years.

After the war he divided his time between running his farm (he had always wanted to be a farmer and if in 1918 funds had been available he would probably never have become a musician) and his role as show-business agent and fixer. His friendly, informative broadcast manner also opened up a new avenue of employment as a radio presenter.

Throughout the 1950's Jack was the resident DJ on the very popular and long running record programme 'British Bandbox', and in 1954 began a new series, reviving his signature tune as its title, 'Say It With Music'. Described as "the biggest thing of its kind yet attempted - a cross between In Town Tonight and Carroll Levis Discoveries", it featured a large resident orchestra, plus guest bands, groups and artists, a comedy interlude and interviews with musical personalities.

During 1955 Jack appeared with his wife Peggy Cochrane on a new radio series, 'Mr. and Mrs. Music' on which she played piano and he played some records. The same year he was on television with a very successful series 'Off the Record' that spotlighted various stars in a fortnightly show.

He made a brief return to band-leading in January 1958 for an EMI album, not surprisingly titled 'Say it with Music'. Probably his last regular radio or television series was 'Words and Music' on BBC TV in 1958 and '59. On it Jack conducted an orchestra of 40 musicians in a varied and wide ranging selection of musical styles.

In 1960 he was appointed a director of Empress

Hotels, overseeing their entertainment requirements. A couple of years later he was mine host of the Middle House, a pub in Mayfield, Sussex. Unfortunately Jack wasn't a very good business man and in 1965 was made bankrupt. He left the pub and moved just a few miles down the A287 to Tunbridge Wells. Still the eager entrepreneur he continued to organise concerts in local halls, but rather than improve his financial state, it got worse and worse. Jack's final move was to a small cottage in Tonbridge, Kent, where he died, practically broke, on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1969, aged 70.

Jack Payne post 1940 Recordings  
H.M.V.

BD 5877 Mar 45 'Pretty Kitty Blue Eyes (v. *Carole Carr*) /  
(v. *Jane Lee*)' Till all our prayers are answered

BD 5879 Apr 45 'Little things mean so much (v. *Jane Lee*) /  
(v. *Betty Webb*)' The sun never sets on my dreams

BD 5883 May 45 'Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive (v. *Nadia Dore*) /  
(v. *Jane Lee*)' I promise you

C 3428 May 45 (with *Peggy Cochran piano*) 'El  
Alamein

Concerto'  
BD 5886 Jun 45 'We'll gather lilacs (v. *Jane Lee*) /  
Love is my reason (v. *Betty Webb*)'

BD 5892 Jul 45 'Robin Hood (v. *Nadia Dore*) /  
Saturday night is the loneliest night of the week  
(v. *Jane Lee*)'

BD 5894 Aug 45 'Chewing a piece of string (v. *The Crackerjacks*)  
/ The Gipsy

(v. *Jane Lee*)'

BD 5897 Sep 45 'Bell bottom trousers (v. *Nadia Dore*) /  
Just a prayer away (v. *Jane Lee*)'

BD 5904 Oct 45 'There must be a way (v. *Jane Lee*) /  
Takin' the trains out (v. *The Crackerjacks*)'

BD 5907 Nov 45 'I hope to die, If I told a lie / Night  
after night (both v. *Jane Lee*)'

BD 5912 Dec 45 'Let's keep it that way / Two can  
dream as cheaply as one (v. *Helen Raymond*)'

## Roland PEACHEY

A Canadian, Roland played electric guitar in several bands, including Felix Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders, before forming his own Royal Hawaiians that were resident at the Mayfair Hotel from September 1944 until well into the fifties.

Born 1912 in Montreal, he worked in a bank while playing semi-pro in the evenings. A first class player, he later opened a guitar teaching school. A musical inventor, he played a three neck guitar that he had made himself.

Roland came to London in 1937 to see the Coronation, eventually married an English girl and stayed. His talents were soon recognised and in 1939 he was featured soloist with Felix

Mendelssohn's Serenaders. He later led his own band at various clubs and hotels, including his long run at the Mayfair.

Roland is believed to have returned to Canada by the late fifties and, following problems with his right hand that needed surgery, gave up playing professionally about 1965.

Roland Peachey Royal Hawaiian Orch Recordings

DECCA

F 7855 'Hawaiian war chant / Sophisticated  
hula (both v. *The Radio Three*)'

F 8008 41 'Serenades of the islands /  
South Sea lullabies (v. *Cyril Shane*)'

F 8134 Jun 42 'Rhythm of the islands / Honolulu'

F 8187 Sep 42 'Sing me a song of the islands /  
Blue

Tahitian moon'

F 8297 Apr 43 'My gal Sal (v. *RP*) / At the  
crossroads'

F 8390 Jan 44 'Chez moi (v. *The Radio Three*) /  
Brazil'

F 8436 Jun 44 'Hawaiian medley No.2 / No.3'

F 8462 Sep 44 'By the waters of Minnetonka /  
Iroquois'

F 8506 Mar 45 'J'attendrai - au revoir (v. *RP*) /  
Wabash blues'

F 8799 Sep 47 'I got rhythm / Yearning'

F 8875 May 48 'Goodbye blues / China boy'

F 9063 Jan 49 'There's nothing else to do in Mala-ka-  
mo-ka-lu / Gentle

evening breeze'

F 9098 Feb 49 'Medley = Roses of Picardy / Under the  
roofs of Paris / Linger awhile / I love you /  
Lover come back  
to me'

F 9260 Nov 49 'In the still of the night / I never knew'

## Donald PEERS

No overnight success, it took Donald Peers twenty years' hard slog around the minor music halls before he achieved the stardom he had strived so long for. Born 10<sup>th</sup> July 1908 at Ammanford, South Wales, a mining town in an area where choirs were abundant, it was only natural that young Donald should be introduced to a world of song.

His father Frank, a colliery worker and a very religious member of the Plymouth Brethren, had hoped that Donald, who had benefitted from a grammar school education, would train to become a teacher. But he rebelled and ran away from home, taking various jobs like painter's labourer and a spell as steward on a coastal tanker. That took him to Lowestoft, where in 1927 he began his show business career, joining comedian Leonard Morris's concert party 'Tons Of Fun', telling jokes and singing while accompanying himself on ukulele. Morris became a lifelong friend and appeared in Peers' 1951 film 'Sing Along With Me'.

Through the thirties depression and into the war years of the early forties, Donald played concert party and bottom of the bill music hall all round the country, slowly working his way up. For the summer season of 1935 he was at Blackpool's

Feldman's Theatre on a bill topped by Tessie O'Shea. He made several broadcasts including his own series over Radio Normandy, one of the pre-war commercial stations. There was the odd recording session, supplying the vocal refrain for bands like Bertini and Jay Wilbur and by the close of the thirties his own solo recordings on Decca, but he was still not a big name.

In 1940 he volunteered for the army and spent the next four years in uniform attaining the rank of sergeant. During the war years he still managed to maintain a recording output. In those dark war years and the days that followed, a cheerful song sung in a soothing sincere style, often helped to overcome the hardships of the time and Donald Peers had a voice and personality able to deliver such sentiment. Out of the army in 1945, he was a last minute addition to the summer season show at Blackpool's South Pier. Variety tours around the country continued to enhance his reputation.

In August 1944 he recorded 'In a shady nook', a 1927 tune originally put on disc by Johnny Marvin, a popular American singer who wrote many songs for singing cowboy Gene Autry (by way of a coincidence Marvin died in 1944). Adopting it as his signature tune the song became so associated with him that even today it's almost impossible to think of Donald Peers without remembering that "shady nook by a babbling brook".

Aware of his growing popularity the BBC, in 1947, gave Donald his own series 'Cavalier of Song' backed by Frank Cantell and the BBC Revue Orchestra. First broadcast on 17<sup>th</sup> June, its popularity ensured that another series followed the next year and again in February 1949.

Unusual at the time, this latter series had a live audience, recorded the previous Sunday evening at either the Kilburn Empire or Hammersmith King's Theatre. So great was his command of an audience that after the first show's recording was completed and the orchestra had packed up, Donald continued to sing to a public that by their continued applause just wouldn't let him go. Pictures and the story of his success earned what would today be described as rave reviews, in all the following day's national newspapers. Some reports later said this was all the work of a good American publicity agent specially hired for the occasion, but whatever the reason it was undoubtedly Peers talent and personality that made it happen. Overnight he was a big star. The series became one of the most talked about shows of the decade.

Donald now began to return to all those variety theatres he knew so well, but this time it was with star billing. Fans, especially the female ones, mobbed him, tearing his clothes like some latter day rock star; all this for a slightly plump little man over 40 years of age. But what he may have lacked in looks, he more than made up for in sincerity and whatever lyrics he sung, he made them believable.

In May 1949 he gave a one man show at the Royal Albert Hall (the first time a variety performer had done this) and for over two hours held several thousand fans spellbound with just two pianos for accompaniment, plus his own magnetic personality. Peers' pianist throughout

much of his career was Ernest Ponticelli, who was on this occasion joined by Joe Henderson. Unlike many singers who only wanted to hear the audience when they applauded at the end of a song, Donald genuinely encouraged his public to join in the occasional sing song, and they just loved it. Over the next couple of years he could do no wrong, with further radio series and a non stop circuit of the halls.

For the summer season of 1949 he topped the bill at Blackpool in Henry Hall's production 'Buttons and Bows' at the Grand Theatre, where the supporting cast included a virtually unknown comic by the name of Norman Wisdom. On Christmas Day he compered the BBC's 'Christmas Cavalcade' that featured Vera Lynn, Denny Dennis, The Keynotes, Freddie Gardner and the Peter Yorke Orchestra.

But all this success was not without its problems, stress related and otherwise. On more than one occasion he collapsed from overwork (George Formby had to take over for the last month of Peers 1949 summer season) and also needed hospitalisation because of a throat problem. Donald's form of relaxation was, like another great crooner Bing Crosby, the golf course and it is quite possible they played a consoling round together when both were knocked out at the first round of the British Amateur Golf Championships at St. Andrews in May 1950. On another occasion in September 1952, on a charity match at Maidenhead Golf Club, Donald partnered Ted Ray playing against Crosby and Bob Hope. On the course the biggest battle was moving through the crowds and the game was abandoned at the 10<sup>th</sup> hole with Don and Ted one up.

Further Decca output during the forties included such popular numbers as 'The homecoming waltz', 'Amapola', 'I can't begin to tell you' and 'Tangerine'. In 1949 Donald changed recording company, signing for H.M.V. and continued through the early fifties to produce a prolific output of many of the popular ballads of the day - 'Powder your face with sunshine', 'Dear hearts and gentle people', 'Tennessee waltz', 'Down in the glen', 'There's always room at our house' and many many more.

Not having record charts in this country at that time there was no confirmation of their popularity, but suffice to say H.M.V. were happy to issue them at a rate of about one a month with many of the songs appearing on the sheet music charts that did exist then. Peers did finally make the charts, though oddly it was in 1968, long after his peak.

1950 brought him a bit of a set-back when, not long home from an overseas tour, his recurring throat problems prevented him from singing for over six months. His return was a live broadcast from Popular Civic Theatre, on which he made his vocal recording of 'The Harry Lime theme'. On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August 1950 Donald made his first appearance at that pinnacle of show business, the London Palladium stage. Joint top of the bill with American organist Ethel Smith, he was the first British male singing star to achieve that position. Also on the show was an up and coming young comedian, Max Bygraves. Not to everybody's taste however, as the Melody Maker reviewer said of Donald "his phrasing is poor, his actions hammy, his diction middling and

completely lacking in sincerity", but most of the audience loved him and he could do no wrong. The following month Peers was back at the Palladium, recording a new Radio Luxembourg programme sponsored by Thomas Hedley & Co. the soap powder manufacturer, backed by a 26 piece orchestra led by Woolf Phillips. This was the first of 39 half hour shows recorded around the country (later ones had the Peter Yorke Orchestra). These broadcasts were relayed across Europe, plus Australia, India and Africa.

Again in November he returned to the Palladium for the Royal Variety Performance, the 21<sup>st</sup> and the one on which Max Miller, annoyed that American comedian Jack Benny had been allocated more time than him, stayed over his allotted time and on coming off was told by show organizer Val Parnell he would never work in one of his theatres again. To which Max is reported to have replied "you're twenty five thousand pounds too late". Donald also on more than one occasion sang at private Royal gatherings.

In 1951 he starred in the British Lion film 'Sing Along With Me' in which he played David Parry, a Welsh (surprise surprise!) grocer who wins a song writing contest and comes to London, only to find that away from his homeland he is unable to write.

Throughout the fifties he continued to tour in variety and broadcast. He was celebrity guest on TV's 'What's My Line' in 1951, where Gilbert Harding guessed who he was from his voice and from September 1952 was heard regularly on 'All Star Bill' with Julie Andrews and Larry Adler. But his heyday was in decline, a new younger style of singer was taking over. Another career set-back came in 1953 when he received quite a lot of adverse publicity after he left his wife of 23 years, Marie, to move in with music publisher Kay O'Dwyer, 22 years his junior, who became his manager.

So in 1954 when bookings were beginning to tail off, he went to Australia where he was still in great demand. His debut there at the Capitol Theatre, Sydney on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1954 was a triumph. Newspaper reports said "they wouldn't let him leave the stage", and so good was his reception across Australia he didn't return to the U.K. until October 1956.

During over two years away his record output here had dried up, although his Radio Luxembourg shows continued to be recorded in Australia. Despite his lack of exposure in Britain it didn't take long, out on the touring variety circuit, for the old Peers magic to win back his fans. A season at the exclusive Cafe de Paris, a guest appearance on T.V.'s 'Ted Ray Show' and then from May 1957 his own 'Donald Peers Show' for BBC television, brought in sack loads of fan letters. Also in May there was the start of a new radio series, 'Peers Parade' with Harold Smart at the electric organ and the BBC Variety Orchestra led by Paul Fenoulhet. This meant he could be seen on television every Saturday followed by a broadcast on Sundays, his comeback was almost complete, all that was needed was a new record.

It was the relatively small Oriole company that put Donald back onto disc, his first in this country for over three years and, as it was now 1957 and rock and roll had reached our shores, it

was an up-beat style Peers on 'Start movin', a minor hit for newcomer Terry Dene about thirty years younger.

Donald was soon topping the bill again, with a variety package 'The Donald Peers Show', backed by Johnny Franks, a boy violinist, and his quartet. During the summer of 1959 Donald was in Cyril Dowler's show at Folkestone Pleasure Gardens, where he re-introduced comedy into his act.

In March 1960 he was back on a London stage, playing a week at Finsbury Park Empire (his first time there since 1953) and sharing top billing with Marion Ryan. One of his first remarks to the audience was "Remember me when I was famous?". By the end of his act, whether they remembered or not, they were calling for more, just like old times. Other tours took him into the sixties, with further summer seasons at Great Yarmouth, Skegness and Blackpool and pantomime appearances most winters, he continued to be a much sought after singer.

Following the sessions with Oriole he was signed by Columbia Records and so restarted quite a regular output. It was 'Please don't go', released by Columbia late in 1968, that became his first hit parade success spending thirteen weeks on the New Musical Express Top Thirty chart, reaching No.6 position during March 1969. An amazing event when you consider this was twenty years after the height of his fame. He had first heard the song, written by Les Reed and Jackie Rae, in Reed's office some time before and had wanted to record it, but was not allowed to because it had been promised to Vince Hill. Eventually Hill rejected the song, giving Peers a top ten hit at the age of 58. His only other chart entry came with almost his last record 'Give me one more chance' in 1972.

Donald continued to return to Australia where he was always welcome, and it was during one of these visits in 1971 that he fell from a Sydney stage injuring his spine, an accident from which he never fully recovered.

A Cavalier of Song he was and so remains to many who recall the gentle voice of Donald Peers, still available from his recorded output of over eighty five singles alone. A man who believed in living every day to the full, even towards the end and in great pain he was said to be still jovial and always ready to crack a joke. Sadly Donald died at a Brighton nursing home in August 1973, aged 63

CROWN		(9 inch records only sold at Woolworth's)	
70	35	'I'm singing in my sleep / Cheek to	
cheek'			
116	36	'Do they miss me at home / Take me	
back			to my boots
and saddle'			
152	36	'Lonely little vagabond / Lights out'	
192	36	'Life begins when you're in love /	
			I'm in love
with you'			
259	36	'Too many friends too many kisses /	
			When I'm
with you'			
342	37	'The adventures of Rusty and Dusty	
(two parts)'			
349	37	'Pennies from heaven / One way	
street'			

( '37 to '40 still to do)

Donald Peers Recordings from 1940  
DECCA

F 7905 41 'Amapola / There goes that song  
again'  
F 7917 41 'Dolores / When they sound the last  
all clear'  
F 7941 Sep 41 'Hey! little hen / Forever and a day'  
F 7956 41 'Just a little cottage / Russian rose'  
F 7975 Oct 41 'St. Mary`s in the twilight / London  
pride'  
F 8029 42 'Maria Elena / Lights out `till  
reveille'  
F 8072 Feb 42 'By candlelight / No more'  
F 8112 May 42 'The sailor with the navy blue eyes /  
Madeline'  
F 8170 Aug 42 'Moonlight cocktail / Sing everybody  
sing'  
F 8188 Sep 42 'Three little sisters / Tangerine'  
F 8202 Oct 42 'This is worth fighting for / The love  
nest'  
F 8269 Feb 43 'Thank you, I`m all right / Johnny and  
Mary'  
F 8280 Mar 43 'Isobel loves a soldier / I met her on a  
Monday'  
F 8304 May 43 'Who`s that knocking at my heart /  
Springtime  
on the farm'  
F 8391 Jan 44 'The homecoming waltz / Nevada'  
F 8418 Apl 44 'In a shady nook / By the river of the  
roses'  
F 8443 Aug 44 'Don`t sweetheart me / It`s love love  
love'  
*(acc by Phil  
Green Orch)*  
F 8495 Jan 45 'You fascinating you / You`re in love'  
*(acc by Harry  
Bidgood Orch)*  
F 8619 Apl 46 'I can`t begin to tell you / So-o in  
love'  
*(acc by Phil Green  
Orch)*  
F 9123 May 49 'Amapola *(acc By Jay Wilbur Orch) /*  
Maria Elena  
*(orch acc)*  
F 9151 Jun 49 'Tangerine / By candlelight' *(orch  
acc)*  
F 9375 Mar 50 'Bow bells *(acc by Bob Farnon Orch) /*  
Nevada *(acc by Jay  
Wilbur Orch)*  
H.M.V.  
B 9763 Apl 49 'Far away places / Twelfth street rag'  
*(acc by Peter  
Yorke Orch)*  
B 9764 Apl 49 'Powder your face with sunshine / For  
you'  
*(acc by Peter  
Yorke Orch)*  
B 9772 May 49 'On the 5-45 / Lavender blue' *(acc by  
PYO)*  
B 9773 May 49 'A strawberry moon (in a blueberry  
sky) /  
It happened in Adano'  
*(acc by PYO)*  
B 9787 Jun 49 'Clancy lowered the boom /  
Dad`s  
birthday waltz'  
B 9792 Jun 49 'Medley recorded at Royal Albert  
Hall : I told  
them all about you / Blue skies /  
There`s a  
rainbow `round my shoulder / If  
you were the  
only girl in the

world'  
B 9801 Jly 49 'Church bells on Sunday morning /  
Twenty  
four hours of sunshine' *(acc by Henry  
Hall Orch)*  
B 9808 Aug 49 'Every where you go / My golden  
baby'  
*(with  
rhythm acc)*  
B 9809 Aug 49 'Lover`s Lane has everything  
*(rhythm acc) /*  
The last mile home *(acc by Henry  
Hall Orch)*  
B 9817 Oct 49 'A rose in a garden of weeds *(acc by  
Ernest  
Ponticelli piano & Henry Hall  
Orch) /*  
Rolling round the world *(with  
rhythm acc)*  
B 9838 Nov 49 'The birthday of the little princess /  
Sleepy  
town express' *(acc by Frank  
Cordell Orch)*  
B 9877 Feb 50 'Dear hearts and gentle people *(acc  
two guitars,  
bass & piano) / I`ll string along  
(acc  
by FCO)*  
B 9890 Feb 50 'The zither melody (Harry Lime theme)  
/  
Medley : Look for the silver lining /  
Just  
around the corner / Powder your  
face with  
sunshine' *(acc by pianists Ernest  
Ponticelli  
& Joe Henderson plus the  
Variety Orch con by Rae Jenkins)*  
B 9899 Mar 50 'Chattanooga shoe-shine boy /  
Music music music' *(acc  
by FCO)*  
B 9903 Apl 50 'I`d`ve baked a cake / Out of a clear  
blue sky'  
*(acc by Frank  
Cordell Orch)*  
B 9907 May 50 'Down in the glen / When there`s love  
at home'  
*(acc by Frank  
Cordell Orch)*  
B 9915 May 50 'Let`s do it again / Daddy`s little girl'  
*(with The  
Cherokeys acc by Frank  
Cordell Orch)*  
B 9924 Jun 50 'Across the meadow / Enjoy yourself '  
*(with  
The Cherokeys acc by Frank  
Cordell Orch)*  
B 9933 Jly 50 'Dearie / Oh! you sweet one'  
B 9945 Aug 50 'I remember the cornfields / Among  
the hills  
of Wales' *(acc  
by F.C orch)*  
B 9974 Oct 50 'My baby told me that she loved me  
*(with The  
Merrymakers) / Sometime (with  
chorus)*  
*(acc by Frank  
Cordell orch)*  
B 9984 Nov 50 'Beloved be faithful *(acc by FCo &  
chorus) /*  
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer  
*(with Hattie  
Jacques as the reindeer -  
acc by Sidney  
Torch Orch)*  
B 10002 Dec 50 'Hors d`oeuvres *(acc by Sid Phillips  
Band) /*  
Me and my imagination *(acc by*

*Torch Orch'*  
B 10025 Feb 51 'You are my true love (*with The Merry Macs*) /  
This is the time' (*acc by Bruce*)

*Campbell Orch)*  
B 10039 Feb 51 'Tennessee waltz / My heart cries for you'  
(*with The Merry Macs acc by Roy*)

*Chamberlain Orch)*  
B 10043 Apl 51 'Get out those old records (*with TMM & RCO*) /  
Mockin' bird hill (*with orch & chorus*)'  
B 10089 Jun 51 (*with The Song Pedlars*) 'Mariandi and I /  
An armful of roses' (*rhythm acc*)  
B 10107 Aug 51 (*with The Song Pedlars*) 'By the kissing rock /  
Sing a little sweeter' (*acc by FCo*)  
B 10144 Oct 51 'Buttercups `n daises `n bluebells / I hope you  
have a happy birthday' (*acc by FCo*)  
B 10158 Nov 51 'I wish I wuz / Cold cold heart' (*inst acc*)  
B 10171 Dec 51 'If you smile at the sun / Hoop diddle-ee-l  
doo-ra-li-ay' (*acc by FCo*)  
B 10192 Jan 52 'Losin' you / Why worry' (*acc by FCo*)  
B 10211 Feb 52 'There`s always room at our house /  
A garden for me'  
B 10227 Mar 52 'Mistakes / Paint yourself a rainbow' (*FCo*)  
B 10240 Apl 52 'We won`t live in a castle / I don`t care' (*FCo*)  
B 10315 Jly 52 'Meet me on the corner / Marryin` time'  
B 10339 Aug 52 'Am I in love / Farewell and adieu' (*acc FCo*)  
B 10351 Oct 52 'A mighty pretty waltz / (*with The Tanner Sisters*) One for the wonder' (*acc by FCo*)  
B 10377 Nov 52 'Two humble people / Encore (medley of his  
most popular songs : Walkin` my baby back  
home / Let the rest of the world go by /  
I love the sunshine of you`re smile)' (*acc by Don Phillips piano*)  
(*both B10377 & B10393 recorded at a public performance*)  
B 10393 Dec 52 (*with The Merry Macs*) 'Singin` in the rain /  
Love is just around the corner'  
B 10411 Jan 53 'Barrels `n barrels of roses / (*with The Tanner sisters*) Lulu  
had a baby'  
B 10429 Feb 53 'Banana fingers / A full time job'  
B 10442 Feb 53 'She wears red feathers / The calendar song' (*with The Kordites*)  
B 10487 Apl 53 'In a golden coach / Celebration rag'  
B 10488 May 53 'Bottle me up / Your cheatin` heart'  
B 10506 Jly 53 'Is it any wonder / No one will ever know'

B 10609 Dec 53 'I guess I`ll have to change my plans /  
A shine on your shoes'  
B 10640 Feb 54 'Changing partners / Lonely'

ORIOLE  
CB 1385 Jly 57 'Start movin` / I want you to want me'  
CB 1431 Mar 58 'Oh oh I`m falling in love again /  
I need somebody'  
COLUMBIA  
DB 4369 Oct 59 'Roses from Venice / If there are stars in my  
eyes' (*with Rita Williams Singers acc by Tony Osborne orch*)  
DB 4427 Mar 60 'The miracle of love / St. Christopher' (*with the Vernon Girls*)  
DB 4488 Jly 60 'Papa he loves mambo / The house of love'  
DB 4572 Jan 61 'Sing / Magic music'  
DB 4654 61 'Put on a happy face / Rosie'  
DB 4733 61 'Just out of reach / Where were you'  
DB 7226 64 'I`m a dreamer / Come take my hand'  
DB 7299 64 'As long as you love me a little /  
Say that you`ll always love me'  
DB 7396 64 'Club night sing-a-long (two sides)'  
DB 7515 65 'Love, like summer has gone /  
I`ve lost my love'  
DB 7784 65 'Put your head on my shoulder /  
If I had my way'  
DB 8079 66 'Games that lovers play /  
I found my love today'  
DB 8162 67 'Turn the world around the other way /  
I don`t know'  
DB 8211 67 'Somewhere my love /  
For those who are young'  
DB 8291 67 'I love you and you love me /  
Tehairno me amore'  
DB 8502 Nov 68 'Please don`t go / I`ve lost my love' (*acc by Les Reed Orch*)  
DECCA  
F 12922 69 'Was it yesterday /  
When I saw you this morning'  
F 13111 71 'Poem of love / Adios baby goodbye'  
F 13302 72 'Give me one more chance /  
I never knew I loved you so'  
F 13359 72 'Round and round / When you hear our song'

## Don PETERS

An Irish born tenor, he first broke into show-business about 1950 when he was booked to tour Scotland in the 'Logan Family Show' that starred comic Jimmy Logan. This association lasted three years, until Don decided to move south. A period out of work ended after he appeared on TV's 'Quite Contrary'. So popular was he with viewers that the one-off booking became a six month contract. Don, who often accompanied himself on piano, had a regular spot on radio's 'Ted Ray Time' from



October 1954 and made further television appearances. He went on tour in the variety show 'Make it a Party' and in March 1955 married Jane the daughter of Bob Kennedy boss of Dudley Hippodrome. Continuing to tour, he played the 1957 summer season at Great Yarmouth Windmill Theatre with Tommy Trinder and from May 1959 had a six month season at Glasgow's Alhambra Theatre in 'Half Past Eight' with Eve Boswell.

Don always seemed reluctant to make records, he said he wouldn't sign a recording contract because "You have to sing what they decide and I like to make up my own mind". Consequently his records are few, but Pye were impressed enough to give his 'Matador' a full page advertisement in the music press. Unfortunately it didn't make it and despite having a good voice Don never made the big time and little was heard of him after rock 'n' roll came along.

Don Peters Recordings  
PHILIPS

PB 240 Feb 54 'Poinciana / To be or not to be'  
*(acc by Wally Stott Orch)*  
PYE

N 15066 Aug 56 'Matador / Never'

## Sid PHILLIPS

Top saxophone-clarinet player Sid Phillips was also a first class arranger and he played a pretty mean stride piano too. In 1923 sixteen year old Sid formed his own band The Riviera Five (later to become The Melodians) that included his brothers Ralph on banjo and bass and Harry on trumpet. Over the next couple of years they performed across most of Europe. Quite a musical family, his younger brother Woolf, a trombonist, became leader of The Skyrockets when they were resident at the London Palladium.

Simon Isidore Phillips, born in London in 1907, began training as a doctor but was more interested in music. In 1927 he won a Melody Maker arranging contest and on the strength of it joined the staff of music publishers Lawrence Wright. He continued to lead The Melodians that toured at home and abroad and in 1928 made their first records on the Edison Bell Winner label. For many of these recordings Sid employed the talents of top vocalists like Sam Browne, Cavan O'Connor, Jack Plant and Betty Bolton.

In 1933 Sid gave up leading his own band to join Bert Ambrose and his orchestra at the Mayfair Hotel (he had been writing arrangements for Ammy for several years). On a 1938 visit to the United States he made quite an impression on several top names and had many offers to stay, but preferred to work in Britain. Back home in 1940 Sid recorded with his own Trio on Parlophone and a year later with a Quintet on Decca.

On the outbreak of war Sid became a special constable where, due to his command of five languages (the result of all that travelling?), he was given the job of questioning foreign

nationals who had to register with the police. Before long he had joined the R.A.F becoming an intelligence officer, but during his five years in the service Sid continued to be involved in music and even managed to record the odd single or two on Parlophone and Decca. While on leave he led a quintet at the Le Suivi Club in London's Stratton Street.

In 1945, now out of uniform, Sid formed a Dixieland style band that among its other bookings played seasons at the Astor Club and the Coconut Grove. For several years he was voted top clarinet player in Melody Maker polls.

In September 1949 he began a long association with H.M.V Records, his first record for them coupling 'The lady is a tramp' with 'Just one of those things', featuring vocals from Jill Allen and Johnny Eager. Leading his nine piece on clarinet and occasional piano, Sid developed a distinctive and very agreeable sound. He could be heard regularly on a Radio Luxembourg series for Rowntree and also on a few airings for the BBC.

Sid was featured clarinet soloist on the Festival of Britain jazz concert staged by the National Federation of Jazz Organisations at the Royal Festival Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1951, in the presence of HRH Princess Elizabeth.

Vocalist Jill Allen left in January 1950 to be replaced by Jane Lee who stayed until September, when Geraldine Farrar took over. Working mainly one-night-stands in 1952 the band was back at the Astor Club for another season that lasted most of the year. This was a venue Sid returned to on several occasions.

With ever changing vocalists, Jo Searle, Rosemary Archer and Eileen Taylor, Sid, during 1952, had the benefit of one of the best when Denny Dennis took over from Johnny Eager, spending about a year touring with the band. One of Alma Cogan's early numbers, 'If n', was a duet with Denny, backed by Sid and his boys. Alma had recorded 'Red silken stockings' with the band in 1951, but the issued version had a vocal by Betty Driver with Alma's version only seeing the light of day on a 1994 CD.

The remaining fifties found Sid's band constantly on the move, with the odd two or three week residency at venues like Green's Playhouse Ballroom in Glasgow and Torquay's 400 Ballroom. He did a 10 week season at the Isle of Man's Villa Marina during the summer of 1959. On radio the band had several regular series and for a while filled Billy Cotton's Sunday lunchtime slot with his 'Clarinet Capers'.

The signature tune Sid used for his post war broadcasts was a little number he wrote himself and called 'Clarinet cadenza', although most people will associate him with his popular recording of David Comer's 1915 composition 'Hors d'oeuvres'. In February 1957 Sid and his band recorded an LP for the Donegall label (DON 1003) on which he hid his identity under the name of The Dixielanders Anonymous.

Sid Phillips died on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1973, aged 65. His son Simon, who was only 16 when his father died, had already played drums in dad's band and went on to become a well respected percussionist, now resident in the States. Another second generation member of the family, Sid's nephew John Altman (his sister Rose's son) is also a respected musician. A saxophone

player, he has composed the music for several films and TV series.				F 8147 Jly 42 'Yankee doodle blues / Runnin` wild'
Sid Phillips Recordings				F 9446 Jun 50 'The darktown strutters ball / Copenhagen'
EDISON BELL WINNER	(and his Melodians)	(recorded 1941)		
5356	Aug 31	'Time alone will tell / Tell me you love me'		ORIOLE (Sid Phillips Septet)
		(both	LB 1023 47	'Moon mist / Readin` ridin` and rhythmic'
v. Al Bowlly)			LB 1024 47	'Chintz and Chippendale / A la mode'
5358	Aug 31	'Roll on Mississippi roll on / Heartaches'	LB 1025 47	'Calahorra / Elma`s delight'
		(both	HB 305 47	(with Rita Marlowe) 'My childhood days /
v. Al Bowlly)				Why be angry
REX	(Edgar Jackson presents Sid Phillips and his Rhythm)		sweetheart'	
8742	Feb 36	'Eeny meeny miney mo / Woe is me'	HB 306 47	" " 'Golden wedding / Where is my lost love'
		(both	H.M.V.	(Sid Phillips Band)
v. Jack Cooper)				vocalists where known are
8863	Feb 36	'Sweet Sue just you / My sweetie went away'		JE = Johnny Eager - JA = Jill Allen - TS = The Tanner Sisters
				DD = Denny Dennis - GF = Geraldine Farrar - BM = Betty Miller
VOCALION	(Sidney Phillips and his Orchestra)			
3841	Jul 37	'Comin` through the rye / Annie Laurie'	BD 6050 Sep 49	'Just one of those things (v. JE) / The lady is a
3934	Sep 37	'Message from Mars / Swing patrol'	tramp (v. JA)	
			BD 6053 Oct 49	'Hors d`Oeuveres / Oh dear! what can the matter be (v. JE & JA)
BRUNSWICK	(Sid Phillips Orchestra)			
8113	Jan 38	'Champagne cocktail' (recorded in New York)	BD 6059 Jan 50	'Be goody-good-good to me (v. JE & JA) /
8187	Jan 38	'Dinner and dance / An Amazon goes a-wooing' (recorded in New York)	lost (v. JA)	Little Jack Frost get
			BD 6060 Feb 50	'Best of all / Don`t ever marry for money (both v. Tanner Sisters)'
8332	Nov 38	'Voodoo / Hullabaloo'	B 9873 Feb 50	(with The Tanner Sisters) 'Mamma knows best
8384	Dec 38	'Music for you / Wedding of a sophisticated Dutch doll'		/ Round her neck she wore a yellow ribbon'
8403	Dec 38	'Plain Jane / Mr. Reynard`s nightmare'	BD 6061 Mar 50	'Bluin` the blues / Frankie and Johnnie (v. JE)
			BD 6064 Apl 50	'Is it true what they say about Dixie / Johnson rag'
COLUMBIA (U.S.A. issue)				
35312	Nov 38	'Palais de danse / Blue romance'	B 9904 May 50	'Royal garden blues / My sweetie went away'
PARLOPHONE	(Sid Phillips Trio)		B 9921 Jun 50	'The old piano roll blues (v. TS) / That`s a-plenty'
F 1661	Mar 40	'Yodel in swing / Give out (both v. The Greene Sisters)'	B 9930 Jly 50	'Kitten on the keys / Ain`t she sweet (v. JE)'
F 1683	Apl 40	'Anything goes / Plain Jane (v. TGS)'	B 9940 Aug 50	'When the saints go marching in (v. JE) /
F 1699	40	'Music for all / In the mood (v. TGS)'		Birmingham
F 1731	40	'Amoresque / Who`s sorry now'		bounce (v. TS)'
F 1803	Feb 41	'I got rhythm / I never knew'	B 9957 Sep 50	(with The Tanner Sisters) 'Have I told you lately
DECCA	(Sid Phillips Quintet)			that I love you /
F 7672	Jan 41	'Six lessons from Madame LaZonga (v. The Greene Sisters) /	Rosy apples'	
			BD 6074 Oct 50	'Silver dollar (v. JE) / Tzena, tzena, tzena
Tuxedo junction'				(v. JE & TS)'
F 7696	41	'Pennsylvania 6-5000 / Southern fried'	BD 6077 Nov 50	'Three little words (v. JE) /
F 7723	Feb 41	'Ridin` high / Hawaiian war chant' (both v. The Greene Sisters)		Nevertheless (v. GF)'
			BD 6078 Nov 50	'English beauty rose (v. JE) / Rikki-tikki toon
F 7758	Apl 41	'Strut, Miss Lizzie / Wabash blues'		(v. JE & Geraldine Farrar)'
F 7845	41	'Mia mia / Serenata'		
F 7888	41	'If you hadn`t gone away / Hot time in the old town tonight'	BD 6081 Dec 50	'Trouble with love is love (v. JE & GF) /
F 7972	Oct 41	'Royal Garden blues / Man about town'		When the harvest moon is shining (v. JE)'

B 10002 Dec 50	(with Donald Peers) 'Hors d' oeuvres'	(v. DD & The Greene Sisters)'	
B 10015 Jan 51	'Sweet Georgia Brown / Canadian capers'	BD 6145Jly 53	'Stratton Street strut / Strictly personal'
BD 6086 Feb 51	'Deed I do (v. JE & GF) / Red silken stockings	BD 6147 Aug 53	'Hot lips / High jinks'
	(v. Betty Driver)'	BD 6148 Sep 53	Free home demonstration / Without a memory
BD 1269 Mar 51	'I do do do like you / The roving kind (both v. JE, GF & TS)'	v. DD)'	(both
BD 6090 Apl 51	'Original Dixieland one step / Redskin'	BD 6149 Oct 53	'Kitchen rag / Flapper rag'
BD 6092 May51	'Stumbling / By heck'	BD 6152 'Nov 53	'At the jazz band ball / Jog trot'
BD 6095Jun 51	'It's gonna be too late (v. JE & Stella Tanner) /	BD 6153 Dec 53	'You've got to see mama every night / Stop ringing my bell
	On top of old Smoky (v. JE & Song Pedlars)'	(both v. BM)'	
BD 6100Jly 51	'Maggie blues (v. JE & Song Pedlars) / Ivory	BD 6156Jan 54	'Way down yonder in New Orleans / Pi-
rag (v. JE)'		ann-a rag'	
BD 6103 Aug 51	'Ain't nobody here but us chickens (v. JE) /	BD 6159Feb 54	'At the Georgia camp meeting / Strut
	Stepping	Miss Lizzie'	
in society'		BD 6164 Mar 54	'South Rampart Street parade / Havin' fun'
B 10121 Sep 51	(with The Tanner Sisters) 'Come on-a my house	BD 6165Apl 54	'Basin Street blues (v. BM) / Squeakin` shoes'
	/ Lonely	BD 6168 May54	'Fancy pants / Disillusioned (v. BM)'
little robin'		BD 6173Jun 54	'Make love to me / Lies (v. BM)'
BD 6106 Sep 51	'Black note serenade / Vampin` (both v. JE)'	BD 6174Jly 54	'Livery stable blues / Canoodlin` rag'
BD 6107 Oct 51	'Kissin` bug boogie / Shanghai (both v. JE)'	BD 6177 Sep 54	'Railroad blues / A penny for a song (v. BM)'
BD 6111 Nov 51	'Clarinet cadenza / That ever-lovin` rag (v. JE)'	BD 6178 Oct 54	'You turned the tables on me / Honky tonk rag'
BD 6114 Dec 51	'Down yonder (v. JE) / Chicago'	BD 6179 Nov 54	'I found a new baby / High Society'
BD 6119Jan 52	'Down the trail of achin` hearts / Detour	BD 6182 Dec 54	'Forty cups of coffee (v. BM) / Muskat ramble'
		BD 6187Jan 55	'Russian rag / Clarinet marmalade'
		BD 6188Feb 55	'I wish I could shimmy like my sister Kate /
(both v. DD)'		Tiger rag'	
B 10202 Jan 52	(with Carl Ravazza) 'Rock rock rock /	BD 6193 Mar 55	'Hearts of stone / Copenhagen'
Like a dream'		BD 6194 Apl 55	'Ko, ko, mo / The jolly jazzers'
BD 6122 Feb 52	'I hear the bluebells ring / Just one more	BD 6195 May55	'St. Louis blues / Sensation rag'
	chance	BD 6198 Jun 55	'Frog legs rag / I never knew'
(both v. DD)'		BD 6201Jly 55	'Who`s sorry now / Sugar foot stomp'
BD 6125 Mar 52	'The birth of the blues / Skip to my Lou (v. DD)'	BD 6204 Sep 55	'Darktown strutters ball / Fidgety feet'
BD 6128 Apl 52	'Grand Central Station / Be my life`s companion	POP 111 Oct 55	'Runnin` wild / Mammy o` mine'
(both v. DD)'		POP 125 Nov 55	'Pete Kelly`s blues / Hard hearted Hannah'
BD 6131 May52	'Stardust / Jazz me blues'	POP 135 Dec 55	'Alabama jubilee / Spanish serenade'
BD 6132Jun 52	'The blacksmith blues / Rhythm rag	POP 169 Feb 56	'Bugle call rag / Memories of you'
(both v. DD)'		POP 193 Apl 56	'Dixieland highway / Beatin` around'
BD 6133Jly 52	'Meet me on the corner (v. Alma Cogan) /	POP 204 May56	'Rockin` thru` the rye / Everybody step'
	Goody-	POP 214Jun 56	'My honey`s lovin` arms / Juke box baby'
goody (v. DD)'		POP 226Jly 56	'Mama don`t allow (v. Don Lang) /
BD 6134 Aug 52	'Sugar bush / Didja ever (both v. DD)'	Glad rag doll'	
BD 6135 Sep 52	'Meet Mr. Callaghan / Raminay (v. DD)'	POP 243 Sep 56	'Alexander`s ragtime band / Any old iron'
BD 6136 Oct 52	'Did you ever see a dream walking / Walkin` to Missouri	POP 259 Oct 56	'When the red red robin comes bob bob bobbin`
(both v. DD)'		along /	
BD 6138 Dec 52	'Blackberry boogie (v. DD) / If'n (v. DD & Alma Cogan)'	Wabash blues'	
BD 6139 Dec 52	'Bruce and the spider / You`re gonna be sorry	POP 263 Oct 56	(with Deep River Boys) 'That`s right /
(both v. DD)'		Honey honey'	
BD 6140 Jan 53	'Honeypot / Town, town parade'	POP 269 Nov 56	'It goes like this / Farewell blues'
BD 6141 Feb 53	'Ding-dong boogie / Black cat rag (v. DD)'	POP 286Jan 57	Selection from film The Best Things in Life are
BD 6143 Mar 53	'Barrellhouse boogie / Dardanella'	Free -	'Button up your overcoat /
BD 6144Jun 53	'Serenade for tin horn / My-na, shay-na, tv-ra	Lucky day /	
		Sunnyside up /	The best things in
		life are free /	
		If I had a talking picture of you /	Birth of
		the blues'	
		POP 299 Feb 57	'I may be wrong / Rum-ba ba'

POP 310 Mar 57 'I'll build a stairway to paradise /  
After  
you've gone'  
POP 329 Apr 57 'Quickstep medley / 'S wonderful'  
POP 343 May 57 'Everybody loves Pierre / Tip top rag'  
POP 363 Jun 57 'Pasadena / Jericho'  
POP 416 Nov 57 'Tropical twilight / The midges'  
POP 456 Feb 58 'Varsity drag / The lolly rag'  
POP 512 Jly 58 'When Irish eyes are smiling /  
What can I say (after I say  
I'm sorry)'  
POP 525 Sep 58 'Happy days are here again /  
Nobody's  
sweetheart'  
POP 549 Nov 58 'Enchiladas - cha cha / Weekend'  
POP 831 Feb 61 '(S P and his Rhythm) 'Sunset /  
Moonmist'  
POP 1006 62 'Chattanooga shoe shine boy /  
Montreal'  
POP 1098 Dec 62 'Marche militaire / Bugle boy'

#### MERCURY

AMT 1072 'Take this heart / Verdie Mae'

#### HANNOVER

HR 1002 'Welcome to the pantry / Farewell to  
the pantry'

## Woolf PHILLIPS

The youngest of four musical brothers Woolf, a Londoner, was born on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1919. His eldest brother Harry remained an engineer playing trumpet in his spare time, Ralph played string bass with various outfits including the one led by fourth brother, clarinet playing Sid.

As a lad Woolf watched his three brothers' band, The Melodians, go from strength to strength culminating in a season at the famed Cafe de Paris, and was determined to follow their example. Taking up trombone as his chosen instrument, his brothers smiled when he informed them he intended to lead his own band one day. Back in the early 1930's trombone players didn't get to lead bands.

At the age of fifteen he began working for music publisher Lawrence Wright as a trainee copyist. Brother Sid was already a staff arranger. At sixteen he went on tour with Teddy Joyce's Juvenile Band and just a year later had reached the pinnacle of most musicians dreams, a place in the great Ambrose band.

His rise to the top had been very quick, too quick as it turned out when Bert Ambrose decided that despite his playing ability Woolf still lacked experience and let him go. Woolf set about gaining that valuable experience by freelancing. He had spells in the bands of Sim Grossman and Joe Loss among others.

By 1938 he was good enough for Jack Hylton to sign him, although it has been said this had as much to do with his cricket playing ability as his musical experience. Woolf's other love was cricket, he was rated good enough for county standard, and Hylton had his own side that played matches wherever they went. Hylton's band at the time included top players like Stan Roderick on trumpet, Les Gilbert alto sax, Billy Ternent and even Sid Millward of Nitwits fame. Woolf stayed with Hylton until he was called up for war service in September 1939. Posted to the Royal Army Medical Corps, he ended up

leading the R.A.M.C. Concert Orchestra that toured Europe and Egypt. During this time he developed a close friendship with fellow trombonist Glenn Miller.

After leaving the army in 1946 Woolf did some arranging for top names, including his old boss Ambrose, as well as Geraldo, Ted Heath and Harry Roy - during wartime leave he had occasionally conducted the Harry Roy band on recording sessions while Harry sat in with the recording engineer. Eventually he fulfilled his ambition by forming his own band that made its first appearance on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1947 at the Hackney Empire. Later in the year his Swing Stars recorded on Columbia, including one of his own compositions 'Solace' and a trombone solo on 'I'm a dreamer' that was described as exceptional.

When Paul Fenoulhet (another trombone playing leader) decided to give up directing The Skyrockets, resident at the London Palladium, in November 1947, Woolf took over. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1948 he married Sylvia Brower at the West London Synagogue.

As well as leading at the Palladium, Woolf was resident during the early fifties on a number of radio series. He led a 27 piece concert orchestra on the BBC 'Morning Music', and was MD of Donald Peers' Luxembourg shows until recordings were switched from a Sunday to a weekday, when he could no longer make it. In October 1952 Woolf took several weeks off from the Palladium to lead the accompaniment on Betty Hutton's UK tour and a year later left for good when he became musical director at the Pigalle Restaurant in Piccadilly.

On radio his orchestra were now resident on 'Variety Playhouse' and backed Vera Lynn on her 'Yours Sincerely' Luxembourg series for a number of years.

Woolf remained at the Pigalle for over seven years, ably supporting their various cabaret and revues that featured such international stars as Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, Danny Kaye and Sammy Davis Jnr. Leaving the Pigalle in December 1960, replaced by Jack Nathan, he concentrated on arranging and TV. But much of his work now came from the States (he had been recording for Coral as far back as 1952) and he eventually settled there permanently. He acted as musical director for a number of American artists including a long association with the Milton Berle shows.

Woolf continued to live in California, where he was conductor of the local Camarillo Symphony Orchestra, and he died there, aged 84, on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

#### Woolf Phillips Orchestra Recordings

COLUMBIA (Woolf Phillips Swing Stars)

DB 2378 Feb 48 My baby just cares for me / I'm a dreamer'

(includes solos by Steve Race

piano &

Malcolm

Mitchell guitar)

DB 2405 May 48 'Poor butterfly / Solace'

DB 2873 Jun 51 (W P Concert Orch) 'Parisian mode / Tortilla'

(both his own

compositions)

## H.M.V.

B 9865 Jan 50 (*with Jack Train*) 'I don't mind if I do /  
The Lord of the  
bloomin' manor'  
B 9878 Mar 50 (*with Max Miller*) 'Come hither with  
your  
zither / I never see  
Maggie alone'  
B 9934 Jly 50 (*with Tano Ferendinos*) 'Dream of  
Olwen /  
My  
heart and I'  
MELODISC

1262 54 'Don't take your love from me /  
What is the  
weather like in Paris' (*both v.*  
*Ronnie Meede*)  
1284 54 'Rock, rock, rock / Merci beaucoup'  
(*both v.*  
*Lee Young*)  
DECCA

F 10416 Nov 54 'Count your blessings instead of  
sheep /  
Your heart, my heart (*v.*  
*Dennis Morley*)'  
F 10522 May 55 'Silver moon / Blue waters'

**Ray PILGRIM**

Appearing on the show-business scene late in 1958, he only just scrapes into the time-span of this book. Unlike most of his contemporaries Ray went to a public school, St. Paul's, West Kensington and afterwards began work with Lloyds Bank. During his National Service in the RAF, Ray discovered his voice when he teamed up with a guitar player, and as a duo they were very popular at camp concerts.

Back in civvy street Ray and some friends jumped on the current rock and roll bandwagon, forming an amateur group called The Earthquakes. Becoming successful, appearing at several talent contests Ray, who as well as singing doubled on bass, was spotted at a London dance hall by David Ede, leader of the Rabin Band. Ede offered Ray the chance to become a vocalist with the band, at the time resident at Wimbledon Palais.

So it was good-bye to the bank as he joined the Rabin organisation, making his debut at Wimbledon over the 1958 Christmas period. Although he appeared nightly with the band at the Palais, most people got to hear Ray singing on the Rabin band's very successful Monday lunch time radio series 'Go Man Go'.

Despite the excitement of the dance hall, Ray continued his studies for an economics degree at London University and in August 1962 left the band in order to concentrate on an academic career in the computer industry. He didn't give up singing all together though, having already made a couple of records for Oriole he continued to appear on Embassy until the label closed down at the end of 1964. Several years later "completely out of the blue" as he put it, Ray was asked to record the theme song for the film 'Carry on Screaming'. Ray also appeared on Embassy as Bobby Stevens.

Ray Pilgrim Recordings

## ORIOLE

CB 1557 Jun 60 'Baby doll / Gamblers guitar'  
CB 1616 May 61 'Little Miss Make Believe / Granada'  
CB 1710 Feb 62 'Red red roses / There's always me'

## EMBASSY

WB 522 Aug 62 (*with Mike Redway*) 'Breaking up is  
hard to do  
/ Sealed  
with a kiss'  
WB 529 Oct 62 'Lovesick blues / Let's dance'  
WB 532 Oct 62 (*with Mike Redway*) 'No one can make  
my

sunshine smile'  
WB 536 Nov 62 'Return to sender / It only took a  
minute'  
WB 542 Dec 62 'Baby take a bow / Bachelor boy'  
WB 550 Feb 63 'Some kinda fun'  
WB 562 Apr 63 'Brown eyed handsome man'  
WB 570 Jun 63 'I like it / Falling'  
WB 573 Jun 63 'Confessin' (that I love you)'  
WB 575 Jly 63 'Forget him'  
WB 576 Jly 63 'Twist and shout / Bobby tomorrow'  
WB 590 Sep 63 'If I had a hammer / Do you love me'  
WB 596 Oct 63 'Mule train'  
WB 597 Oct 63 'You'll never walk alone'  
WB 602 Nov 63 'You were made for me / Sue's gotta  
be mine'  
WB 606 Dec 63 'I can dance'  
WB 614 Jan 64 'Don't blame me'  
WB 615 Jan 64 (*with The Beatmen*) '5-4-3-2-1'  
WB 620 Feb 64 'Borne on the wind'  
WB 645 Jly 64 (*with The Beatmen*) 'Kissin' cousins'  
WB 649 Aug 64 " " 'Have I the right /

Such a night'  
WB 656 Sep 64 " " 'Together'  
WB 671 Dec 64 'Somewhere / Yea, yea'

**Ronnie PLEYDELL**

Born at Cheltenham on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1913, Ronnie took up piano at the age of ten and added violin a couple of years later, although later still as a professional musician he was more likely to be featured on saxophone and clarinet. While studying at the Royal College of Music he won the 1932 Melody Maker Dance Band Championship individual award for his alto-sax playing.

On the strength of his win, Ronnie joined Sim Grossman's band at the Pavilion, Bournemouth, staying most of the thirties. He also freelanced and had spells in several provincial dance bands. In 1940 Ronnie joined the R.A.F where he led a five-piece service group, to much acclaim. On demob he initially worked for Frank Weir at Fischer's Restaurant and Sid Phillips at the Astor Club. He then had eight months in the Skyrockets Orchestra at the London Palladium.

In October 1946 Ronnie left the Skrocks to form his own eight piece band, taking up residency in the ballroom of a smart new restaurant, The Ballerina, at Wooton Mount, Bournemouth. His signature tune was 'Grey mist' a piece he had written during his RAF days to describe the mist over the Cornish coastline. April 1947 found the outfit back in town at Hammersmith Palais, providing relief for Lou Preager's band who were out on the road for a month. The Pleydell Band then split the summer months between the Ocean Hotel, Sandown, Isle

of Wight and the Headland Hotel, Newquay. In September they moved into the Savoy Ballroom at Southsea.

After another three month dance hall season, at Brighton Aquarium's Princess Ballroom, Ronnie's band made its West End debut, opening at Fischer's Restaurant on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1948. In June the band began a series of late night broadcasts, using Doreen Stephens with Cyril Shane or Lee Lawrence as vocalists.

Now recognised as one of London's top bands, in January 1949 they moved into the exclusive Embassy Club, where Ronnie on alto-sax led a line up comprising a further four saxes, one trumpet and three rhythm. Vocalists were Cyril Shane and Kay Harding. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1949 the band had some early TV exposure when the BBC broadcast a live floor show from the club. In early 1950, still at the Embassy, a young man by the name of Jimmy Young was vocalist and second pianist with the band. In June 1950 they all moved to the Trocadero Restaurant in Piccadilly, where the band was resident for almost four years. Next came a season at the new Cresta Ballroom, on the site of the old Alma Theatre in Luton, followed by a three year run at Torquay's Grand Hotel, that took them up to December 1960.

With the decline in resident dance bands Ronnie dropped to a trio, working various clubs and hotels. Eventually he played as a solo pianist, and it was while playing for guests at the Nare Hotel in Veryan, Cornwall, that he collapsed and died on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1994. He was 81 years of age. Ronnie's wife Dorothy had died a few years earlier.

The only Ronnie Pleydell recording I am aware of is just one on Melodisc.

MELODISC (*Ronnie Pleydell Concert Orch*)

1309            Sep 54 'On Fifth Avenue / To be your  
love'